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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND  
THE PRIESTHOOD: AN ANALYSIS OF OFFICIAL CHURCH  
STATEMENTS CONCERNING BLACK PRIESTHOOD DENIAL

THESIS

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This study sought to determine whether the change in the LDS Church practice of black Priesthood denial on June 8, 1978, was voluntary or was a result of external and internal pressures against the Church. Four official statements given by the First Presidency of the Church were examined using Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's seven elements of rhetorical action. It was determined that external and internal pressures from the NAACP, civil rights activists, and dissonant LDS believers, against the Church's practice of black Priesthood denial, were the motivations behind the change in Church practice.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Christian religions and religious practices have been the focus of many scholarly inquiries. Doctrinal diversity among Christian faiths is so prevalent that much has been written to criticize or defend differing beliefs and practices. Among these self-proclaimed Christian faiths is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Because many different sects of the LDS Church exist, for purposes of consistency this inquiry will focus on the largest sect whose headquarters are located in Utah. This sect calls itself The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as well as the Mormons (Whalen 268).

A brief explanation of the origin of the LDS Church is important for developing an understanding of its unique belief system. Joseph Smith was a young man with a burning desire to discover truth in religion. One day he knelt in the woods and prayed that God answer the question, "Which of all the Churches is true?" God the Father and Jesus Christ appeared and answered, "None." Three years later, in 1823, Smith was praying in his room when the angel Moroni appeared and told him about large and small plates that were engraved by Mormon (Moroni's father) in the 4th century A.D.. These

plates held the words of the prophet Nephi and would reveal the scriptures of the true Church. In 1827, Moroni finally gave the plates to Smith to translate into what would become The Book Of Mormon (Elder Szendre and Elder Eardley, personal interview, 22 August 1990). The Book of Mormon is a text of holy scripture that contains God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas and the everlasting gospel ("The Book" Intro.). After Smith's prophetic experience was published, he founded a town in Illinois called Nauvoo where the LDS (Mormons) could begin their community that would reach 20,000 inhabitants (Whalen 63).

After The Book Of Mormon, Smith and a loyal follower named Brigham Young, recorded revelations they experienced and developed a new biblical text for the LDS entitled, Doctrine and Covenants. The Pearl Of Great Price, the last biblical work of Smith, contains details of his ancestry, his first vision, and the discovery of the large and small plates (Kirban 5). Although LDS believers regarded Joseph Smith as the founder of the only true Church, his new religious ideas were considered blasphemous to many non-believers in Hancock, Illinois and other counties near Nauvoo (Hill 2). Anti-LDS groups formed and printed a newspaper entitled Nauvoo Expositor, whose content was in blatant opposition to Smith's beliefs and writings as well as his community (Kirban 26). Enraged by the writings of the opposition, Smith destroyed the newspaper, announcing

that it was libelous and a public nuisance. Smith was arrested in Carthage, Illinois, for obstructing freedom of the press and was shot in his cell by an angry mob (Hill 2).

After Joseph Smith's brutal murder, Brigham Young assumed the position of leadership for LDS believers. Brigham Young colonized the LDS followers and moved them to Utah to avoid persecution and to practice their beliefs (Fraser 6). Today, the LDS Church flourishes in Utah and throughout the United States, as well as internationally.

The Church's practices today are much the same as the practices of Joseph Smith and his followers in Nauvoo. The office of the First President is held by a Prophet, who is the head of the Church. Changes in doctrine occur only after the First President receives a revelation from God, as Joseph Smith did. The LDS Church is a unique Christian faith in that it has no appointed minister in the houses of worship. These houses of worship are called stake houses and each is comprised of several fully organized congregations or wards (Kirban 29).

Within the Church, male members receive different levels of Christ's blessings depending upon their age or worthiness (Smith 159). The First President or Prophet holds all of the duties or labors (also referred to as keys) of the Church, which he distributes among the differing offices within the hierarchical chain (Smith 136). According to the late First President Joseph Fielding Smith,

the organized distribution of power within the LDS Church is crucial in maintaining the Church's theocratic structure. He explains this belief by stating: "Take away the organization of the Church and its power would cease. Every part of its organization is necessary and essential to its perfect existence. Disregard, ignore or omit any part, and you start imperfection in the Church" (149). The actual structure of the organization is relatively simple and unique among all Christian faiths. The highest offices are held by the First Presidency. The First Presidency consists of two First Counselors and/or Presidents and the First President and/or Prophet (Fig. 1. Ecclesiastical Chart).

This inquiry will focus on the Priesthood, an office where a worthy male can advance from one rank to the next (Whalen 140). In order for a male to enter the Priesthood he must successfully pass a worthiness interview, which consists of questions concerning morality and the Church's beliefs (Dr. J.A. Cooper, personal interview, 30 July 1990).

A brief explanation of the origin of the Priesthood is important for understanding the magnitude of this office for male members of the Church. LDS members believe that Joseph Smith and his scribe, Oliver Cowdery, were visited by angels "clothed in glory" that conferred the office of the Priesthood upon them (Hill 88). From this religious experience the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthoods were created, marking the beginning of two of the most

Chart of Ecclesiastical Organization

First Counselor    First President    Second Counselor

Quorum of Twelve Apostles

Quorum of Seventies            Quorum of Seventies

First Counselor    Stake President    Second Counselor

Ward Bishopric

(One Bishop ordained per Ward)

Melchizedek Priest

(High priests, Seventies, and Elders)

Aaronic Priest

(Priests, Teachers, and Deacons)

Members of the Church

Fig. 1. Ecclesiastical Chart. (Source, Dr. A. Cooper, Interview, Denton, Texas, 30 July 1990).

prestigious offices within the LDS Church. Before 1978, Black males in the Church were not allowed to enter the Priesthood. Prior to this date the LDS Church maintained the doctrine of its founder, Joseph Smith, that Blacks were cursed and unable to enter the Priesthood ("Pearl Of" Abraham 1:21). This denial to enter the Priesthood represented not only a painful rejection for Black members but seemed to epitomize Black repression and anti-Black attitudes that were prevalent outside of the Church as well (Bringhurst xix). The status of Black males within the Church changed in 1978, when a prophetic experience allegedly occurred to First President Spencer Kimball, allowing him to change the doctrine. Several factors may help explain the change in the Church rhetoric between 1951, when a justification for Black Priesthood denial was announced, and 1978, when the denial was lifted. Protest actions by members of the civil rights movement that on occasion were staged on the Temple grounds in Salt Lake City, Utah, is one key factor. Beginning in 1930, the NAACP began to take action in Utah to change the state's anti-Black attitudes, which were prevalent in its legislation. Because the LDS Church was so powerful and was the dominant religion in Utah, and because the Church denied Blacks entrance into the Priesthood, the NAACP and other pro-equality organizations focused their attention and actions on the Church. The pressure and demonstrations by

organizations and individuals to encourage the LDS Church to develop new doctrine were forceful and prevalent outside of the Church as well as inside (Trank 220).

The following list summarizes four official statements that represent benchmarks in relations between Blacks and the Church.

1951           The Church announced that it would uphold its attitudes regarding the status of Blacks and declared that its belief on this subject was not an injustice.<sup>1</sup>

1963           The Church stated that it did not practice any prejudicial doctrine that would deny any person regardless of race, color, or creed the rights to equal citizenship in the United States.

1969           The Church said that in time God would occasion a revelation that would enable Blacks to enter the Priesthood.

1978           The Church declared that it had lifted its prohibition on Blacks entering the Priesthood.

Although it is difficult to measure the amount of influence or to assess the effects that provoke any given

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<sup>1</sup>Grant Anderson, manager of the Historical Department of the LDS Headquarters in Salt Lake, indicated that the 1949 announcement only can be found in secondary materials at this time.

action, it is valid to recognize external and internal discursive and non-discursive pressures that lead to rhetorical acts comparable to the four official statements. This study will adopt Karlyn Kohrs Campbell's definition of a rhetorical act that states: "A rhetorical act . . . is an intentional, created, polished attempt to overcome the obstacles in a given situation with a specific audience on a given issue to achieve a particular end" ("Rhetorical" 7). The present study recognizes the "obstacles" that led to the public statements delivered by the LDS Church as those administered by the NAACP and other civil rights organizations. The public statements, the reasons for those statements, and a variety of contextual elements combine to make this phenomenon worthy of scholarly inquiry.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to analyze selected statements, delivered in 1951, 1963, 1969, and 1978, by the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints concerning the status of Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood. Although this study will concentrate on the four official statements, it is impossible to examine them without attention to external and internal influences. Specifically, this study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent was the change in the status of Blacks with the LDS Church voluntary?

2. To what extent is the Karlyn Kohrs Campbell lexicon useful in analyzing the four official statements of the Church?

#### Significance of the Study

This study may prove to be significant in many ways. First, this study may contribute to the study of discourse that spans a period of time. Analyzing the discourse on a specific topic as it traces several decades may prove important for developing insight on societal and institutional change as represented within the rhetoric.

Second, this study may add to the understanding of rhetorical criticism as a multi-dimensional and contextual element of scholarship that is inclusive of value systems and change throughout society. John Heinerman and Anson Shupe contend that in order for individuals to understand the goals of the LDS Church one must study the speeches, sermons, and writings of the Church leaders (24). These goals and changes may be evident and worthy of study within LDS Church rhetoric.

Finally, this study may contribute to a better understanding of the rhetoric surrounding the status of Blacks within the realm of the LDS Church. The changed status of Blacks within the LDS Church may serve as a significant indicator of what successful or unsuccessful external influences determined this rhetorical phenomenon. This study of the changed status of Blacks within a

religious realm and the significant factors that may have led to that rhetorical change may instruct future studies on the possible implication that rhetorical acts are responses to changes in societies value system.

This study may prove significant for many groups and organizations. Organizations that envelop their philosophy with the fight for Black equality can recognize the implications that civil rights activities had on the Church's doctrinal change. This study analyzes possible external influence as the force behind the change in Church rhetoric. This inquiry may prove useful for pro-equality organizations in recognizing successful efforts for eliminating racial prejudice within an institution.

This inquiry adopts the belief that an action provokes a rhetorical act. If this study is a successful example of this theory and the chosen method, it may contribute to the diverse opinions concerning how rhetorical criticism should be conducted. It also may prove helpful to future rhetoricians in that a strong foundation of theory and method may have been exhibited. This inquiry also could provide support for scholars who argue for the validity of the chosen theory and method.

This inquiry also may prove useful for the LDS Church. The external influences surrounding the doctrinal change may not prove instructive to Church members due to their belief in prophecy. However, a close look at a non-LDS perspective

could prove useful for the LDS in creating a defense for its belief system. LDS followers liken themselves to the Jews and often feel persecuted as the Jews were, even going so far as to refer to non-LDS individuals as gentiles (Whalen 5). Historically, the violent persecution of LDS followers created a role of martyrdom for Joseph Smith. This role of martyrdom can be closely associated with the martyrdom of Jesus Christ, the King of the Jews. An understanding of perceived opposition or a perceived denial of prophecy also may aid the LDS in a defense of its unique belief system.

#### Scope of the Study

This study will examine statements made by the First Presidency on Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood as well as the actions that may have influenced change in Church rhetoric. This study will focus only on LDS doctrine that denied Blacks entrance into the Priesthood and the subsequent retraction of that doctrine. This study will not focus on any other LDS doctrine.

This study will examine the four official statements made in 1951, 1963, 1969, and 1978. In order to provide insight into the exigent nature of the four official announcements, an examination of external pressures (civil rights groups), and internal pressures (members of the LDS Church), will be an additional focus of this study.

#### Review of Literature

This review will examine relevant works on the LDS

belief system, its history, the status of Blacks in the Church, rhetorical theory concerning the chosen method, and relevant works on the Black perspective. The literature addressed consists of books and articles in scholarly journals.

### Books

In order to understand Church doctrine concerning Blacks, a close examination of LDS scripture is useful. Volumes of testaments that the LDS believe are closely associated with the Holy Bible, such as The Book Of Mormon, Pearl Of Great Price, and Doctrine And Covenants, describe the belief system of the Church. These books or testaments are useful because they address the historical foundations of the LDS belief system.

Many authors have attempted to interpret the belief system of the LDS Church. Some explain the Church's beginnings with an ample amount of skepticism and question whether it is a Christian faith. Others accept the beliefs of the LDS Church to be doctrines descending through prophetic experience from Jesus Christ. This controversy is prevalent in the literature.

Since the status of Blacks within the Priesthood of the LDS Church is the focus of this inquiry, the belief system of the LDS hierarchy is of considerable importance. Authors such as Salem Kirban, Anthony Hoekema, and Robert Morey, discuss with skepticism the hierarchical belief system of

the LDS Church. Whereas many books criticize LDS beliefs, these authors simply reveal contradictions between Christian faiths that follow the Holy Bible and the LDS and the texts they follow. The viewpoints are important because they not only discuss LDS doctrine but they illustrate some of the opposition the LDS Church has dealt with concerning the role of prophecy in its belief system.

In contrast with the authors mentioned above, Thomes Alexander, Lamond Tullis, and Joseph Fielding Smith provide explanations and descriptions of the Priesthood, office of the First Presidency, and the hierarchical belief system of the Church. Among many writers that have attempted to share their knowledge of the LDS Church, these authors were chosen for this inquiry because they offer a clear, concise discussion of LDS history and beliefs based on historical facts as well as personal theory and conviction.

An interesting account of the LDS beliefs is shared by Lieut Gunnison, an author that lived among the LDS during its early years in Utah. Although it was written 138 years ago, this text provides a prototypic account of the early beliefs and practices of the LDS Church.

A fascinating contrast in perspectives is evident between authors Donna Hill and Fawn Brodie. Both authors recounted the life of Joseph Smith, beginning with his ancestry, tracing his religious life and work, and finally his death. Hill depicts Smith as a moral man, a visionary

who dedicated his life to prophecies that were revealed to him by God. Although Hill attempts to remain historical, her account of Smith's life is filled with admiration and awe for a man believed to be the founder of the only true Church, the LDS. Brodie, in contrast, presents Smith as a con artist or "mythmaker," who cunningly led people to believe in prophetic experiences that were non-existent. Many authors have attempted to write about Joseph Smith's life. The authors chosen for this inquiry are informative, insightful, and impart a vast amount of knowledge, which is an essential element for research.

Authors such as James Warner, Styne Slade, Thomas Alexander, and Roger Launius, provided important works on the beginning and development of the LDS Church. The works of these authors were chosen because they include consistent historical facts and elaborate detail. These authors provide vivid descriptions of the origin of the Church, particularly the Church's struggle to survive the opposition it has encountered. The detail and theories presented by these authors are helpful for understanding the historical foundations of the Church.

An examination of the status of Blacks within the Church reveals a great deal of controversy. Members of the LDS Church maintained that the doctrine and belief system of the Church must await prophecy from the First President before change could occur. Others, outside of the Church,

were not willing to accept prophecy as appeasement for the status of Blacks and demanded reform. The literature concerning the status of Blacks and the Priesthood will be divided into two parts consisting of those following the beliefs of the Church and those opposing those beliefs.

Several authors have written in defense of the LDS belief concerning Black Priesthood denial. John Stewart, Edwin Firmage, and Richard Mangrum, defend the Church, claiming its position is righteous and fair. Their books defend and justify the Church's position on the status of Blacks. Stewart includes official statements by the First Presidency as evidence of the fairness of the LDS Church's doctrine concerning Blacks. John Lund also uses scriptures and stories in an effort to explain the perceived prejudicial attitudes of the Church. His book traces the "story of the Negro" from the mark of Cain to the present status of Blacks. Lund's attention to detail in an attempt to explain doctrine is helpful in understanding the LDS perspective. Although Hill's book focuses primarily on the history of Smith, she includes a chapter that addresses the status of Black members in the Church. Hill explains that Smith was not prejudiced against Blacks and that he did all that he could to free them from slavery and move them North. This historical account is useful for this inquiry because it provides another defense of the Church's doctrine. All of these authors attempt to explain the Black Priesthood

denial and defend the foundations of the LDS religion. As with many religions, these authors rely on the belief system of the Church to explain and defend its actions. Although the arguments posed within these books are based largely on abstract religious thinking, the books provide rebuttal to the accusations of prejudicial activity from within the LDS Church.

Newell Bringhurst traces the history of Blacks within the Church from its origin until the time the denial for Blacks to enter the Priesthood was lifted. Although this book is not anti-LDS, it is strong in its conviction that the status of Blacks within the Church was primarily one that exhibited oppression. This book, laden with detail, defends the belief that the Church's reasons for changing the status of Blacks was due largely to civil rights activity and societal pressure.

John Heinerman and Anson Shupe portray the LDS as a "corporate empire" that changed its doctrine on Blacks because of financial considerations. The authors support their findings with charts that indicate the financial status of the Church and its economic growth. This book explained that the Church recognized financial loss due to its lack of interaction with predominately Black countries just prior to the prophetic experience that would allow Blacks into the Priesthood. This information was useful for this inquiry in that it revealed insightful information for

the analysis.

Einar Anderson and William Whalen provide information in their books that depict the status of Blacks in the LDS Church as nothing less than prejudicial behavior. Although these books examine many aspects of the LDS religion, the authors allot segments of their books to the Black issue. The books briefly trace the history of the Blacks within the Church and attempt to explain its doctrine using scriptures from its Bibles.

Jerald and Sandra Tanner discuss the prejudicial nature of the Church by denouncing its treatment of Black members as racist behavior. This book focuses on LDS believers who find the doctrine of their own Church to be unsatisfactory. The discourse of dissident members of the Church may prove useful for understanding a LDS perspective.

Stephen Taggard presents the viewpoint of a LDS believer concerning the status of Blacks in the Church. This extensive study traces the policy that denied Blacks the Priesthood. This book shares the belief that the doctrine on the status of Blacks should be viewed as a response to historical circumstance rather than a revelation. Taggard is not considered a dissident member, though his dissatisfaction about the status of Blacks is prevalent within this text.

Karlynn Kohrs Campbell wrote several books that illustrate her theories concerning critical analysis. The

texts chosen for this inquiry are The Rhetorical Act and Critiques Of Contemporary Rhetoric. The Rhetorical Act describes Campbell's definition of rhetoric and how rhetorical criticism should proceed. She includes a lexicon of elements to be used when conducting an analysis of text. Campbell includes exercises in criticism to illustrate her theories. Critiques Of Contemporary Rhetoric offers useful definitions and explanations concerning rhetoric and criticism. Campbell focuses on situational or organic criticism and defines them as methods that must reveal or respond to the eccentricities of discourse ("Critiques" 14). These books present Campbell's theories and provide the method to be used in this study. Together with Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Campbell explored another facet of method in, Form And Genre: Shaping Rhetorical Action. The authors define generic criticism as an analysis of specific types of rhetorical acts that envelop certain situations. This text was valuable in discovering additional ideas that Campbell has on rhetorical criticism. This understanding of Campbell's ideas will aid this inquiry when conducting the analysis.

Foss has written a useful textbook on methodology and theory that explores a variety of perspectives on conducting analysis. This text is useful for this inquiry because it enables one to ascertain many perspectives on criticism. An abundance of texts concerning method of rhetorical

criticism are available. Evaluating texts to determine what would be useful for this study was an important step in the process of this inquiry.

Another book consulted on method and theory of criticism was Edwin Black's Rhetorical Criticism: A Study In Method. Black's text discusses genre criticism, which cannot be directly used for this inquiry. However, Black's book was useful in discovering other methods concerned with rhetoric as a response to an action. A great number of texts address civil rights activities and the NAACP. Although these texts are not central to this inquiry, they address important issues related to the Black perspective and the fight for equality.

Louis Knowles and Kenneth Prewitt distinguish between individual racism, which exists between individuals, and institutional racism, which is inclusive of society and social practices. This book provides insight into the non-compliance of institutions in stopping oppression. An understanding of institutional racism is central to this inquiry.

Albert Blaustein and Robert Zangrando focus on the history of Blacks from 1776 to 1968. They trace the progress of American Blacks and include official government documents and speeches made by presidents concerning Blacks and civil rights. This text provides insight into the development of racism in America and the difficulties it has

caused for Black people.

Although much has been written about Blacks and the problems of racism, Robert Russ Moton provides a unique text that discusses the thoughts of the "average" American Black. This personalized approach illustrates vivid human feelings about racism and oppression. By separating the overwhelming problems of racism as a whole from individuals, Moton develops a clear understanding of the problem. The humanistic concepts of this text may prove useful for understanding the implications of Priesthood denial.

Henry Hampton and Steve Fayer provide a comprehensive history of America's Civil Rights Movement. This text, a compilation of one thousand interviews with Black people effected by racism, provoked insight and emotion concerning the plight of Blacks.

A thorough examination of all aspects related to Priesthood denial to Blacks is essential in conducting a rhetorical analysis of the official LDS statements. In order to achieve an adequate understanding of the LDS Priesthood denial to Blacks, the belief system of the Church, the method and theories to be utilized, and the Black perspective concerning racism and the Church must be analyzed.

#### Scholarly Journals

Journal articles provide a great deal of significant information on the LDS Church and Black Priesthood denial.

Royal Shipp examines white Mormon attitudes concerning Blacks and the Black Priesthood denial. This article focuses on the riots and other physical actions taken by protesters of the LDS doctrine. It was useful for comprehending the antagonism of the opposing forces felt by the Church. Lester Bush a dissonant member of the Church, often wrote controversial statements concerning the Black policy. Bush's article provides a history of Black Priesthood denial from the times of Brigham Young until the 1970s. His controversial article refused to accept Joseph Smith as the originator of Black Priesthood denial blaming other Church officials for implementing the denial after Smith's death. Sterling McMurrin, also a member of the LDS Church, made a public statement at the annual NAACP convention concerning Black Priesthood denial. In his address, laden with strong opinion concerning the doctrine on Blacks, McMurrin boldly announces his dissatisfaction with the Church's practice. Lowry Nelson another dissonant member, openly discussed his anti-LDS policy opinion. His public statements describing the Black Priesthood policy as intolerable, were met with opposition from the Church. His published article seeks to open the LDS Black Priesthood issue to public discussion and, hopefully, rectification.

Bringhurst has written extensively on the issue of Black Priesthood denial and the status of Blacks within the Church. One Bringhurst article used for this inquiry

consists of an interview with two mormon leaders concerning the Black Priesthood issue. This article revealed inconsistencies in the LDS defense of its doctrine on Blacks. Another contribution from Bringhurst is an evaluative statement on the decision of the Church to change its policy on Blacks entering the Priesthood. This article traces the change in doctrine and describes the reasons for change as vague and long in coming.

An interesting debate on the reasons for the change in the Church's rhetoric took place between Armand Mauss, Kendall White and Daryl White. White and White characterize the change in the status of Blacks as inevitable due to internal and external pressure. Mauss, denounces these findings, arguing that the changes were solely due to internal practice. White and White refuted this accusation, stating that Mauss took their concepts out of context and that the study was not concerned with prophecy but social change as evident through external and internal factors. The nature of the arguments in this series of articles offered a wealth of information on the differing opinions concerning the change in Church rhetoric. Rhetorical theory and criticism is a topic of much study. The ideas of Wander and Campbell are useful for this inquiry. Wander repeatedly argues that criticism should have a socially redeeming quality and that ideological criticism is a way to produce socially responsible works.

Wander's concepts are applicable in the pursuit of studying society and cultural pressures. Although ideological criticism is not the focus of this inquiry, Wander contributes original concepts that can be utilized in a non-political analysis.

Campbell's contribution of articles is vast and useful for this study. Campbell argues that subjective criticism is vital for scholarly inquiry. Although not every article written by Campbell is applicable to this inquiry, an understanding of her ideas concerning criticism is paramount.

This review of the literature focuses on the history and beliefs of the LDS Church, Black Priesthood denial and the Black perspective, and rhetorical criticism and theory. These significant examples focus on important areas for analysis. After reviewing the literature significant to this study it is now appropriate to focus on the steps that will be used.

#### Methodology

The methodology will be divided into categories that describe the theories, procedures, and rationale of this study. This study will attempt to determine the extent of societal influence surrounding the doctrinal change of the LDS Church concerning Black Priesthood denial.

For purposes of clarity, this study will identify the definitions of rhetoric that will be utilized in the

analysis. Many scholars have attempted to define rhetoric in one concise sentence. This study recognizes several different definitions of rhetoric that seem to be consistent with Campbell's definition. Campbell states: "Rhetoric arises out of conflict--within an individual, between individuals, or between groups. The basic conflict involves the perception of a problem--a gap between existing conditions and desired change, or between current policies and practices and proposed goals" ("Critiques" 9). Her definition challenges one to discover areas outside of the actual text that reveal a constructed reality. Within these same parameters, scholars such as Lloyd Bitzer developed the theory that certain situations call rhetoric into existence (5). Although Bitzer is the primary founder of genre criticism, this study recognizes his scholarship as practical and applicable for understanding LDS Church rhetoric as a response to a situation. Campbell clarifies her definition of rhetoric, stating that: ". . . social truths - and thus rhetoric - are 'subjective' and 'evaluative'; rhetoric is grounded in issues that arise because of people's values" ("Rhetorical" 5). This study recognizes that rhetoric, as defined above, is a response to a given problem. If rhetoric "arises out of conflict," then rhetorical analysis must include all elements that help one understand the conflict. Social criticism allows the critic to examine the trends in society, and helps disclose

the views of a given society (Foss 6). Philip Wander a scholar of social and ideological criticism states: "The critic examines the world view conveyed by a rhetorical artifact, the facts that are and are not acknowledged in the artifact, and the consequences and alternatives that it presents or ignores in light of moral, social, economic, and political issues" (497). By looking at elements that are not present directly in the text of the artifact one can develop an analysis that recognizes the exigency that prompted the rhetorical act. This recognition of external influence upon a text allows one to discover the values and norms within a society and the manner in which values and norms are utilized to construct reality. To further this point Campbell states that definitions of rhetoric must acknowledge that rhetoric studies the ethical use of words to justify belief and actions through cultural values ("The Rhetorical" 15). Cultural values often are prevalent within popular religious organizations and practices such as those exhibited by the LDS Church.

Campbell developed a lexicon to analyze the parts of a rhetorical artifact. These elements include purpose, audience, persona, tone, structure, supporting materials, and strategies. The first element, purpose, seeks to discover three things in an artifact or rhetorical act:

1. The specific purpose, central idea, or major conclusion.

2. The specific areas of treatment, what aspects were limited.
3. What was the desired response from the audience ("The Rhetorical" 28).

The second element, audience, focuses on "Those selected by the act" and "The role prospective audience members are asked to play" ("The Rhetorical" 29). The third element, persona, includes "The role adopted by the rhetor in making the case," for example, teacher, prophet, moralist ("The Rhetorical" 29). The fourth element, tone, examines the rhetor's "Attitude toward the subject" and "Attitude toward the audience" ("The Rhetorical" 29). The fifth element, structure, encompasses the introduction, body, conclusion and transitions in the text to understand the way the materials are organized ("The Rhetorical" 30). The sixth element, supporting materials, concentrates on the different kinds of evidence used as support in the discourse ("The Rhetorical" 31). The last element for conducting the analysis is strategies, which includes the "selection of language, appeals, arguments, and evidence and their adaptation to a particular audience, issue, and occasion" ("The Rhetorical" 31). These elements of rhetorical action enable a critic to analyze, describe, interpret and evaluate rhetorical acts ("The Rhetorical" 16).

The elements of rhetorical action will be applied in the analysis of this study. First, this study recognizes

the traditional method used in applying the elements to the discourse: describing, interpreting, analyzing, and evaluating. In addition to these methods of application this inquiry adopts Campbell's argument that the application should serve the social function of raising issues and encouraging discussion ("Criticism" 10).

The seven elements of rhetorical action will be applied in order, to the four official statements written by the First Presidents of the LDS Church. Because this study focuses on societal and cultural elements as represented within the discourse, a close analysis of word choice and usage will be strategic in discovering those contextual elements that help explain the change in Church rhetoric. The seven elements of rhetorical action enable a close analysis of word (symbol) usage. Second, this inquiry will discuss the external and internal factors that contributed to the change in Church rhetoric. Civil rights activity, actions by the NAACP, and actions by dissonant members of the Church will be examined in order to determine the amount of influence, if any, the prevailing cultural and societal activity had on doctrinal change. Finally, this inquiry will include a discussion of the findings and offer suggestions for further research and attempt to evaluate specific rhetorical actions by recognizing societal elements that may have contributed to the actions. Campbell's method and theories acknowledge that a rhetorical act may be

influenced by elements that are not directly included in the body of the text. These theories may prove useful for this inquiry.

Although Campbell does not endorse the views of Wander, they both agree that critical points of view are subjective ("Response" 126). A belief in individual thinking as associated with criticism has developed some degree of controversy among rhetorical scholars. Forbes Hill responded to Campbell's ideological method, stating: ". . . they will take either the scholarly way or the Partisan way out of the area of scholarly criticism" (122). He contends that Campbell and Wander take the Partisan way out and that such "a priori" opinions expressed as one-liners are no part of scholarly work (123). When reviewing religious doctrine and discussing societal influence, however, belief systems cannot be proven or disproven with scientific facts. Therefore, introspective criticism is vital for purposes of this inquiry. Wander states: "The purpose of writing criticism is to share a world of meaning with human beings . . . the critic offers, along with a particular judgement, and way of judging, a definition of being" ("Rhetoric" 450). Campbell and Wander agree that a critic has a responsibility to be subjective and to impart a level of social value or importance through criticism. Campbell's seven elements are examples of her theories on rhetorical criticism and are adopted for use in this

inquiry. In order to recognize the possible influences that led to the rhetorical acts selected for this study, a subjective analysis is essential. Campbell's seven elements enable a subjective analysis to be applied.

#### Plan Of The Study

Chapter II will present the historical development of the status of Blacks within the Church. Chapter III will contain an analysis of the official statements of 1951, 1963, 1969 and 1978 and will discuss the events surrounding the Church's rhetorical action. Chapter IV will contain a discussion of the findings, conclusions, and suggestions for further research.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Grant Anderson, manager of the Historical Department of the LDS headquarters in Salt Lake, indicated that the 1949 announcement only can be found in secondary materials at this time.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATUS OF BLACKS IN THE LDS CHURCH

#### LDS Doctrine And The Origin Of The Black Race

This chapter discusses the history of the status of Blacks in the LDS Church from 1827 to 1844. It is not the purpose of this chapter to encompass all historical events of the Church but to trace the origin of anti-Black doctrine and historical events concerning Blacks. To understand the origin of Priesthood denial, it is important to examine the derivation of anti-Black attitudes prevalent during Joseph Smith's life and in his biblical translations. Although a wealth of literature exists concerning the history of the Church, little is written about the history of the status of Blacks in the Church. Smith's writings of LDS doctrine set the standard for the status of Blacks in the Church and will be an important focus of this chapter.

The Book Of Mormon, as mentioned in Chapter I, contains the history of the LDS Church as translated by Smith. The LDS believe that descendants of Israelites lived in America around 600 B.C. (Brigham 4). These ancient inhabitants, initially called Nephites, were named after a holy man Nephi ("The Book" 1). Nephi, considered a righteous and godly

man, built a temple so his people would have a house of worship. Not everyone was content with Nephi's holiness and rule. His two brothers, Laman and Lemuel, formed a group consisting of dissonant Nephites and fled to the woods to begin a nomadic life away from Nephi (Brighamurst 4). Laman and Lemuel founded a nation of people called the Lamanites. The Lamanites, an unrighteous nation, were unwilling to abide by God's holy standards. God, furious with the Lamanites' unholy ways, cursed them with Black skin. As Nephi explains in The Book Of Mormon,

" . . . wherefore, as they were white, and exceedingly fair and delightsome, that they might not be enticing unto my people the Lord God did cause a skin of Blackness to come upon them" (2 Nephi 5:21). As the Lamanite nation progressed, additional ungodly dark-skinned nations formed such as the Amalekites and the Zoramites ("The Book" Alma 21:1-8). The LDS believe that American Indians are descendants of dark-skinned nations of ancient America (Brighamurst 5). Smith's translated origin of Blacks is consistent with anti-Black attitudes prevalent among white people during his life.

#### The Interface Between LDS Attitudes Toward Slavery And LDS Doctrine

In 1831, Smith established his Church in Kirtland, Ohio and Independence, Missouri (Hill XVii). In Missouri the LDS encountered controversy concerning their religious

practices. Missourians, uncomfortable with the LDS immigration to Missouri, began accusing LDS believers of promoting abolition. Validating Missourians' accusations, William Wines Phelps, a loyal LDS believer, began encouraging free Blacks from other states to come to Missouri and join the Church (Bringhurst 16). In The Evening And The Morning Star, a Church publication printed in Independence, Missouri, Phelps stated, "As to slaves, we have nothing to say; in connection with the wonderful events of this age much is doing toward abolishing slavery, and colonizing the Blacks in Africa" (Hill 160). The thought of abolishing slavery in Missouri posed a threat to slaveholders (Taggart 19). Rumors began to circulate that the LDS were encouraging slaves to revolt against their owners. Fearing angry mobs would remove the Church from Missouri, Smith made several attempts to speak out against abolition (Taggart 42). To appease the slaveholders, Smith stated, "I do not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South shall not hold slaves, than the South have to say the North shall" (Taggart 43). While Smith seemed to indulge the South, some LDS believers could not oblige antiabolitionist attitudes. Oliver Cowdery wrote in a letter to his family, "I have been long enough in slaveholding states to know that they never will, neither can they compete with free states in point of society, enterprise and intelligence" (Gunn 183). The social

pressure to conform to antiabolitionist ideas was so severe in the South that many LDS believers struggled with their antislavery attitudes (Bringham 26).

At the peak of the LDS antiabolitionist and antislavery struggle, Smith wrote a correction to the Old Testaments', Book Of Genesis. This revised book, titled Book Of Moses details the misconduct of Cain and his descendants identifying them as the ancestors of Blacks (Bringham 41).

In 1835, Michael Chandler, a salesman of Egyptian artifacts, sold Smith papyrus rolls of ancient Egyptian writings (Bringham 34). Smith declared these Egyptian writings to be biblical texts of the prophet Abraham. He translated these writings that defined the LDS belief in premortal existence, and included them in Pearl Of Great Price (Bringham 34). The concept of premortal existence forced Smith to reevaluate the Church's position on the status of Blacks. Smith's translation of premortal existence declared Blacks destined to be inferior to whites because they were descendants of the cursed Cain (Tanner 5). Bruce McConkie, a modern day LDS leader and member of the Council of Seventies, explained Smith's doctrine of Blacks and premortal existence as: "Those who were less valiant in pre-existence and who thereby had certain spiritual restrictions imposed upon them during mortality are known to us as the Negroes. Such spirits are sent to earth through the lineage of Cain, the mark put upon him for his rebellion

against God and his murder of Abel being a Black skin" (qtd in Tanner 4). As the LDS Church became unpopular with Missourian slaveholders, Smith became more outspoken against Blacks. Smith's new attitudes, reflective of the Book Of Moses and the Book Of Abraham, were in contrast to earlier writings in The Book Of Mormon concerning Black racial inferiority. The Book Of Mormon suggests a possibility for racial improvement if dark skinned people affiliated with civilized and righteous whites (Brigham 43). In his later writings Smith adopted the belief that dark-skinned people were so inferior that racial improvement was an impossibility under any conditions (Fredrickson 45).

The efforts made by the LDS Church to gain favor in the South were futile. Missourians found LDS efforts to speak out against abolition unconvincing, forcing the Church to relocate in Illinois (Whalen 63). In Illinois, where slavery was not a controversial issue, Smith and LDS believers completely changed their stand on the question of slavery. No contemporary explanation exists for this change in attitude toward Blacks that took place in the LDS Church. Smith, declared that it made his "blood boil" to see the injustices and cruelties of oppression the Black encountered (Bush 18).

In 1844, Smith ran for president of the United States on a third-party ticket (Brodie 362). His campaign included many national issues including slavery. Smith stated,

"Wherefore, were I the president of the United States, by the voice of the virtuous people . . . when that people petitioned to abolish slavery in the slave states, I would use all honorable means to have their prayers granted . . . that the whole nation might be free indeed" (qtd in Bringhurst 55). Smith was murdered the same year he announced his candidacy for president of the United States. The apparent polarization of beliefs in the LDS Church concerning Blacks has left the historical picture sketchy and incomplete (Thomasson 720). Although the historical literature indicates that LDS believers frequently changed their attitude concerning the question of slavery, LDS doctrine on the status of Blacks within the Church remained consistent. Laden with scriptures concerning Black racial inferiority, Smith's translated bibles limited the role of Blacks in the Church.

Since the Church settled in Utah in 1847, it has had dominant control of the economic, political and religious life of most residents in the state (Maag 10). Following trends of Black oppression evident in the United States, the Church practiced Black Priesthood denial without persecution until civil rights activists deemed this practice intolerable. Civil rights activities and actions of the NAACP, that coincide with the dates of the official statement to be analyzed, will be included in Chapter III as part of the analysis.

A brief explanation of the origin of LDS attitudes toward Blacks and texts that dictated a justification for Priesthood denial have been discussed. An understanding of the history of the Priesthood and Priesthood denial is now significant.

#### LDS Doctrine Concerning Priesthood And Priesthood Denial

The origin of the Priesthood, briefly discussed in Chapter I, is important for understanding the doctrine and beliefs of the LDS Church. The LDS Church acknowledges its holy or "restored" Priesthood as the only authority to administer the ordinances of the Gospel (Anderson 77). This restoration derives from the religious experiences of Smith and Cowdery in 1829 and 1830. While translating the Book Of Mormon, Smith discovered a passage concerning baptism for the remission of sins. Confused by this passage, Smith and Cowdery went into the woods to ask God to explain its meaning. While in the woods, Smith and Cowdery received a visit from John the Baptist sent by Peter, James, and John (Richards 83). John the Baptist, answering Smith's question concerning baptism for the remission of sins, stated, "Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins . . ." (Richardson 83). This religious experience restored the Aaronic

Priesthood. The restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood, as experienced by Smith and Cowdery, established the first level of the hierarchical chain. The responsibilities or keys that the Aaronic Priesthood holds are:

1. Administering the gospel;
2. Baptism by immersion into water for the remission of sins;
3. The gospel of repentance;

Simply, a male in the Aaronic Priesthood has limited responsibility but he can preach the LDS gospel, and baptize (Smith 142).

The restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood occurred one year after the restoration of the Aaronic Priesthood. Although no direct accounts detailing the religious experience that revealed the Melchizedek Priesthood exist, many references to the revelation appear in Doctrine and Covenants (Hill 88). A male in the Melchizedek Priesthood holds the same keys as the Aaronic Priesthood. In addition to the Aaronic keys, a Melchizedek Priest can ordain males into the Aaronic Priesthood by laying on of hands. The Book Of Mormon explains the manner of laying on of hands as part of the ceremony of ordination. An Elder, or Melchizedek Priest, lays his hands on the pending Priest and states: ". . . 'In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a Priest, I ordain you to be a teacher, to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ'. . . And after

this manner did they ordain Priests and teachers, according to the gifts of God" (Moroni 3:2-4). The restoration of the Priesthood, as revealed by Smith, instituted the hierarchical structure of the LDS Church. Nearly every function involving male members of the Church is dependent upon whether they are ordained Priests (Maag). As mentioned in Chapter I, until 1978, all worthy males were eligible to enter the Priesthood at the age of twelve, except Blacks.

The conflicts the Church experienced from 1831 to 1844, in Missouri, mark the origin of Black Priesthood denial. Smith's anti-Black statements found in his translated texts Book Of Moses and Book Of Abraham, describe the descendants of Blacks as ". . . cursed as pertaining to the Priesthood" ("Pearl Of" Abraham 1:21). Anderson paraphrases Smith's scriptures concerning Black Priesthood denial by stating, "Negroes in this life are denied the Priesthood; under no circumstances can they hold this delegation of authority from the almighty (Abraham 1:20-27). The gospel message of salvation is not carried affirmatively to them (Moses 7:8, 12, 22) . . ." (94). The scriptures and teachings of Smith established a precedent for the anti-Black attitudes of future leaders and followers. This anti-Black attitude was evident in the Church's prohibition of Black/white marriage. Brigham Young justifies this doctrine by stating, "If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of God, is

death on the spot. This will always be so" (qtd in Tanner 10). In 1954, Mark Peterson, a LDS Apostle, rationalized this prohibition by stating, "There are 50 million Negroes in the United States. If they were to achieve complete absorption with the white race, think what that would do. With 50 million Negroes inter-married with us, where would the Priesthood be? Think what that would do to the work of the Church" (qtd in Tanner 10). The anti-Black doctrine of Smith, justified modern Black Priesthood denial for the LDS Church until the revelation in 1978.

In the Church, the Priesthood is one of the most prestigious offices a male can hold. Of the Priesthood, Joseph Fielding Smith stated, "He [the Lord] has chosen those who, at least, have shown a willingness and a disposition to obey him and keep his laws, and who seek to work righteousness and carry out the purposes of the Lord" (136). LDS doctrine prevented Blacks from entering the Priesthood despite their willingness and disposition. Black males could attend Sunday school, donate their time and money to the Church, and participate in various social and service functions. However, they could not enjoy salvation to its fullest or participate in any LDS rites where the Priesthood was a prerequisite (Maag 10). An explanation of the religious practices denied Black males is important for understanding the magnitude of Priesthood denial.

First, unless a male is an ordained Priest he cannot

serve on a mission. Serving on a mission is an anticipated experience for a male member of the Church. Around the age of nineteen, the First President decides where a young ordained Priest will go to bear witness of the Church (Richards 249). Although humility is the greatest virtue of a returned missionary, one cannot ignore the prestige that accompanies this dedicated service. Recognition, favor in God's eyes, and self respect are some advantages for serving a mission. Although the LDS Church maintained that it could do more for the "Negro" than all the other Churches combined, it could not offer Blacks missionary service (Lund 121).

Second, a man must be ordained a Melchizedek Priest to marry in the Temple. Temple or celestial marriage is a wedding ceremony held in a LDS Temple that seals the marriage for all eternity (Richards 193). In Doctrine and Covenants, Smith states, ". . . we see that celestial marriage is the crowning Gospel ordinance. If men and women have obeyed this holy ordinance and all the other principles of the Gospel, following the resurrection and the great judgment day, then they shall be Gods" (qtd in Anderson 88). Black males were not only denied the honor of Priesthood on earth but were unable to attain godhood in the next life.

Finally, to advance in the hierarchical chain of the Church a male must first enter the Priesthood. Practically every function a male can participate in is dependant upon

whether he is an ordained Priest (Maag 10). The LDS believe that good works, Church duties and ordinances, and sinlessness, will enable them to attain salvation (Anderson 118). If a male possesses a high rank in the hierarchical chain it is due, among other things, to his good works. John Stewart, a LDS scholar, explained the practicality of excellence and opportunity among men by stating, "Under Christ's plan some would attain the highest degree of glory, some a lesser degree, and some would be lost . . ." (26). Black males, not allowed to enter the lowest degree of "glory" on the hierarchical chain, were severely limited in the number of functions they could perform and the amount of recognition they could receive in the Church.

An explanation of the LDS Priesthood and the implications of Black Priesthood denial have been discussed. Chapter III will include an analysis of the four official statements of the LDS First Presidency concerning Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood.

## CHAPTER III

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR OFFICIAL STATEMENTS

Using the Karlyn Kohrs Campbell lexicon for analyzing a rhetorical act, this study will analyze four official statements given by the First Presidency of the LDS Church concerning Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood. Campbell's lexicon of terms contains seven elements that can be used to promote discussion about a rhetorical act (19). As mentioned in Chapter I, Campbell defines the seven elements to be used are as follows:

1. Purpose: the conclusion argued (thesis) and the response desired by the author.
2. Audience: the author's target; those listeners or readers selected by the act; the audience's role.
3. Persona: the role adopted by the persuader in an argument (such as teacher, preacher, reporter, prophet, etc.).
4. Tone: the author's attitude toward the subject and the audience (such as personal, sarcastic, instructive, etc.).
5. Structure: the way the materials are organized to gain attention, develop a case, and emphasize certain elements.

6. Supporting materials: different kinds of evidence for the argument.
7. Strategies: adaptation of language, appeals, and arguments to shape the materials to overcome the rhetorical problem.

Campbell explains, "These categories provide a set of labels or terms that let a critic or rhetor talk about a rhetorical act" (33). The seven elements allow the critic to discover the basic components of a rhetorical act and devise an analysis through the information found.

In the present study, external and internal pressures that precede the date of the statement will be discussed then the seven elements will be administered, in order, to the four official statements. At the end of each statement analysis there will be an evaluative summary. A chapter summary will conclude Chapter III.

The LDS Church published the four official statements used in this inquiry. Grant Anderson, manager of the Church's Historical Department in Salt Lake City, Utah, authenticated three of the four official statements on August 1, 1990 during a telephone interview. The first official statement concerning Black Priesthood denial cannot be authenticated due to two cited dates, August 17, 1949 and August 17, 1951. Anderson was unable to locate the statement dated 1949 in its entirety but did locate the statement of 1951 in its entirety in secondary materials.

This inquiry will include the statement dated August 17, 1951 for the analysis. To assist the reader, references to specific passages in an official statement will be designated by the appendix in which the official statement is found and the paragraph where the specific words are found. For example, A #4 will be used to designate the fourth paragraph of the official statement in Appendix A, C #12 will be used to designate the twelfth paragraph of the official statement in Appendix C, etc..

#### Analysis Of The Official Statement

Of August 17, 1951

#### External and Internal Pressures

As stated in Chapter I, this inquiry will examine the external and internal influences that occurred prior to the dates of the official statements. This section will concentrate on the official statement of August 17, 1951. In 1947, Smith stated, "From the days of the prophet Joseph until now, it has been the doctrine of the Church, never questioned by any of the Church leaders, that the Negroes are not entitled to the full blessings of the Gospel" (qtd in Bush 43). Although Church leaders never found the doctrine questionable, others outside of the Church did. Always known for its high moral standards and family atmosphere, the LDS Church began justifying Black Priesthood denial to keep favorable appearances in Utah. Black immigration had more than doubled in Utah between 1940 and

1950, and this rapid influx made it increasingly more difficult for the Church to maintain its anti-Black practices (Bringhurst 166). In 1939, Utah's LDS-controlled legislature extended its antimiscegenation statute that prohibited interracial marriage (Bringhurst 168). The law prohibiting interracial marriage, and the unchanging living conditions of the Utah Black generated unrest among pro-equality groups. In the 1940s, unsatisfied with Utah's legislature, protesters focused attention on the LDS Church. In his dissertation, Utah Elites and Utah Racial Norms, David L. Brewer stated,

" . . . the Utah situation has become significant for two reasons: 1) Before 1964, the year this study began, Utah was the only 'Northern' state without civil rights legislation. 2) The Mormon Church, which prevails in Utah, does not accord religious equality to Negroes" (160).

Protesters believed the denial for Black equality in the LDS church added to white prejudicial attitudes in Utah. Many protesters accused the LDS church of setting a racist standard that limited Black employment specifically employment from white non-LDS employers (Maag 41).

As the fight for Black equality grew in the 1940s so did public awareness. The Roosevelt and Truman administrations were active in abolishing discrimination in various government agencies and departments (Woodward 135-

139), and governmental recognition brought new attention to the growing demands of the civil rights movement. Religious organizations were suddenly eager to change anti-Black attitudes and practices. Protestant, Jewish, and Catholic leaders joined the fight against Black oppression by endorsing the civil rights movement (Leoscher 28-54). Despite the growing awareness of the oppression of Blacks evident in other religious faiths the LDS church remained aloof avoiding any association with civil rights activities (Bringhurst 166). Externally the pressure to change Black Priesthood denial was growing steadily. The strongest forces demanding change for Blacks prior to the 1951 statement were protest action against the Utah legislature, government activity to abolish discrimination, and religious organizations fighting for Black equality (Bringhurst).

As pressure from pro-equality groups mounted, some LDS believers began to worry that change would occur inside the Church. Lester Bush stated,

" . . . the ultimate argument advanced against a change in policy was that it would lead to miscegenation . . . . A member had written . . . to inquire whether 'we as Latter-day Saints are required to associate with the Negroes' . . ."  
(42).

The First President undoubtedly put this concerned LDS believer at ease when he replied, "No special effort has

ever been made to proselyte among the Negro race, and social intercourse between the Whites and the Negroes should certainly not be encouraged . . ." (qtd in Bush 42). Not all LDS believers reacted the same to the civil rights movement. In 1947 the LDS church contemplated expanding its missionary service to Cuba. To help decide whether missionaries should enter Cuba, the Mission President wrote a letter to Lowry Nelson, a prominent sociologist and LDS believer asking: "Are there groups of pure white blood in the rural sections, particularly in the small communities? If so, are they maintaining segregation from the Negroes? The best information we received was that in the rural communities there was no segregation of the races and it would be difficult to find, with any degree of certainty, groups of pure white people" (qtd in Tanner 28). The response from Nelson epitomized the growing dissatisfaction some LDS believers had with the practice of Black Priesthood denial.

I am sad to have to write to you and say, for what my opinion is worth, that it would be better for the Cubans if we did not enter their island - unless we are willing to revise our racist theory. To teach them the pernicious doctrine of segregation and inequalities among races where it does not exist, or to lend religious sanction to it where it has raised its ugly head would, it seems to me, be tragic.

(qtd in Tanner 28)

The official statement of 1951 was the first official LDS justification of Black Priesthood denial. The external and internal pressures prior to 1951 would justify the Church's sudden need to defend its racist practice.

#### Elements In Application

##### Purpose

The first element to be discussed is purpose. Purpose seeks to discover the following:

1. Thesis: the specific purpose, central idea, or major conclusion;
2. Narrowing the subject: limiting the aspect of the issue to be treated;
3. Response desired: the beliefs and actions the author seeks from the audience (Campbell 20).

First President George Albert Smith issued the first official statement concerning Black Priesthood denial. In exploring the specific purpose, it is evident that Smith's 1951 statement was a justification for the Church's policy on Black Priesthood denial. The statement boldly announced that the Church's position was the Lord's commandment and had little to do with Church policy. This statement declared the position of the Church and ultimately the purpose or thesis of the statement.

Smith narrowed the subject of the statement by justifying the Church's position on the status of Blacks

using only doctrine accepted by the Church. For example, in an attempt to explain Church beliefs Smith stated,

The position of the Church regarding the negro may be understood when another doctrine of the Church is kept in mind, namely, that the conduct of spirits in the pre-mortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality . . . (A #3)

To better understand this passage an explanation of pre-mortal existence is necessary. Pre-mortal existence is the belief that an individual exists in another sphere with God, and that every man and woman regardless of race is the son or daughter of heavenly parents. To LDS believers pre-mortal existence explains the origin of man prior to his/her existence on earth (Lund 38). Because only LDS believers accept pre-mortal existence, Smith narrowed the subject limiting any rebuttal to the Church's justification for Black Priesthood denial. For example, Smith attempted to create an either/or argument if non-LDS individuals attack the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial they are attacking its belief system. This strategy suggests that one must either accept or not accept the Church's belief system.

The desired response from the audience was to accept the Church's position on Black Priesthood denial as a commandment from the Lord and nothing else. Smith attempted

to remove responsibility for Black Priesthood denial from the Church by stating, ". . . failure of the right to enjoy in mortality the blessings of the priesthood, is a handicap which spirits are willing to assume in order that they might come to earth" (A #3). Smith's statement suggests that pre-existing spirits are willing to have Black skin to become mortal regardless of the handicap. If one accepts this religious theory then any accusatory statements regarding Black Priesthood denial must be directed at God for his commandment and/or at ambitious spirits for embodying Black mortals. Understanding this justification, Smith's statement invites a favorable response from his audience.

#### Audience

The second element for discussion is audience. Campbell defines audience as: "Those selected by the act: the target group the rhetor seeks to influence" (29). The First Presidency delivers the official statements from the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, Utah during General Conference. General Conference is where Church officials assemble together semi-annually to make official Church statements and affirm beliefs (Elder Szendre, telephone interview, 1 October 1990). Campbell's second element asks that the target audience the rhetor seeks to influence be identified. Throughout Smith's 1951 statement justifications for and definitions of Church beliefs are evident. Smith chose to include racist statements of former

First Presidents and explanations that describe Black skin as a handicap. Smith disregards his Black audience and targets his argument at white non-LDS believers. Smith obviously addressed white individuals when he stated,

. . . the conduct of spirits in the premortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality . . . spirits are willing to come to earth and take on bodies no matter what the handicap. (A #3)

Considering the fight for civil equality prevalent during Smith's statement, it seems obvious that Black audience members would not accept their skin color being described as a handicap. It is difficult to access whether Smith intentionally or unintentionally excluded his Black audience. He included racist quotations from former First Presidents that described Black skin as a "curse" and a punishment from God (A #1). Smith's comments and descriptions throughout his statement lacks any empathy or respect for the Black race.

Imparting the attitudes of the Church, Smith illustrated an emphasis on non-LDS audiences. This is evident in Smith's attempt to explain the Church's belief in pre-existence. Smith included an elaborate explanation of Church beliefs to provide an answer to the "Negro question." In an attempt to establish credibility Smith used statements

concerning Black Priesthood denial given by late prophets Brigham Young and Wilford Woodruff. Smith then discusses the position of the Church concerning pre-mortal existence in detail. By quoting prophets and explaining basic doctrine Smith attempted to include an audience of non-believers unfamiliar with Church beliefs and practices.

#### Persona

Campbell's third element is persona, an indicator of the role adopted by the persuader in making the argument (Campbell 20). It seems evident that the persona of the persuader for all four official statements is President or First President. Campbell's definition of persona allows one to extend beyond the literal role (President or First President) of the persuader to the assumed or perceived role. Considered Prophet by LDS believers, Smith also adopts the persona of explainer. Smith's statement explains the doctrine of the Church offering believers and non-believers the First Presidency's interpretation of Church practices. To conclude his explanation on pre-mortal existence and Black Priesthood denial Smith stated, "The few known facts about our pre-earth life and our entrance into mortality must be taken into account in any attempt at an explanation" (A #4). The persona of explainer is evident in Smith's attempt to impart understanding and affirm Church beliefs. Explaining Black Priesthood denial Smith stated, "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of

direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization . . ." (A #1). To justify Black Priesthood denial and define Church beliefs to non-LDS individuals, Smith adopted the persona of explainer.

### Tone

The fourth element utilized in this analysis is tone, the author's attitude toward the subject and the audience (Campbell 20). This element allows the critic to identify specific word choice and usage for understanding the author's attitude. For purposes of clarity tone will be divided two areas: author's attitude toward the subject and author's attitude toward the audience.

#### The Author's Attitude Toward The Subject

There are two evident attitudes toward the subject in Smith's statement. First, Smith maintains a personal conviction and adherence to his Church's practices of Black Priesthood denial. Second, in an effort to defend Church practice an attitude of White supremacy is evident.

The first line of Smith's statement literally stated the "attitude" of the Church (A #1). Directly to the point, Smith stated that the position of the Church concerning Black Priesthood denial would remain the same. Initially Smith used words indicating permanence and rigidity such as, "always," "policy," "commandment," and "direct" (A #1). Smith immediately established the Church's resistance to

change doctrine concerning Black Priesthood denial. He established presiding strength as the motivation for a strict adherence to Church doctrine. By including statements from late "prophets of the Lord," Smith established a historical adherence to the practice of Black Priesthood denial. By including a statement of the prophet Young, Smith established a strong foundational authority in the Church. A rigid and immovable tone is evident throughout Smith's statement.

Smith established White superiority in the Church by describing Black individuals as inferior or immoral. Smith chose to include a statement by the late prophet Wilford Woodruff that stated, "The day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have" (A #2). By using Woodruff's declaration in his statement, Smith established an immense polarization between "that race" and White people.

He also chose to use the racist comments of Brigham Young and quoted him as saying,

Why are so many inhabitants of the earth cursed with a skin of Blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the holy priesthood, and the law of God. They will go down to death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy Priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then

come up and possess the priesthood, and receive all the blessings which we now are entitled to. (A #1)

Young's explanation of Black Priesthood denial depicts Blacks and their ancestors as degenerates and extends the idea that Black people come second to white people even for God's blessings.

Smith furthers the tone of white superiority by stating,

. . . coming to this earth and taking on mortality is a privilege that is given to those who maintained their first estate; and that the worth of the privilege is so great that spirits are willing to come to earth and take on bodies no matter what the handicap" (A #3).

The "handicap" Smith described is when pre-mortal spirits embody a Black person. Smith's statement offers little compassion for Blacks but permeates white superiority.

#### The Attitude Toward The Audience

Smith's attitude toward the audience is authoritative. As Prophet and expert on LDS church doctrine, Smith imparts his knowledge concerning Black Priesthood denial in many ways. First, he makes statements that establish an authoritative tone. When explaining Black Priesthood denial he stated, "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord . . . negroes may become members of the church but that they are not entitled to the priesthood at this time" (A #1). This sentence is significant because of Smith's word choice.

Black Priesthood denial is not merely a "policy" but a "commandment." The recognizable authority in this sentence is the LDS church. Smith established that the Lord determines doctrinal change for the LDS Church. Another authoritative word used by Smith is "entitled." Smith implies that white males hold authority in the Church because they are "entitled" to the Priesthood whereas Black males do not. Smith declared, ". . . there is no injustice whatsoever involved in this deprivation as to the holding of the priesthood by the negroes" (A #3). Smith, using his authority as prophet, attempted to thwart skepticism and defend the Church by maintaining that Black Priesthood denial was not an injustice.

#### Structure

The element structure asks that the introduction, body, and conclusion of the artifact be identified. Understanding the structure reveals the way materials are organized to gain attention, develop a case, and emphasize certain elements (Campbell 20). The introduction of Smith's statement includes an attention gaining strategy and an attempt to narrow the subject. The first sentence of the statement explained, "The attitude of the Church with reference to negroes remains as it has always stood" (A #1). This sentence established the subject of the statement and gained attention by boldly offering tradition as a justification for Church policy without any explanation.

This strategy compels the audience to continue listening to find out more information. The next line of the statement introduced Smith's perspective as he established the facts concerning the Church's belief. Smith stated, "It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine that negroes may become members of the church but that they are not entitled to the Priesthood at the present time" (A #1). Smith can escape blame for Church policy by immediately announcing the Lord as responsible for Black Priesthood denial.

By appearing righteous or helpless to change the conflict, a rhetor can create a positive relationship with the audience. Smith organized the argument in the first paragraph of the body chronologically. He included a historical perspective by incorporating lengthy quotes of former First Presidents who explain Black Priesthood denial. The second paragraph included topical organization. First, Smith explained the position of the Church by introducing the doctrine on pre-mortal existence. Second, he revealed how and why pre-mortal spirits embody Blacks. Finally, Smith concluded the body of his statement by declaring there is no injustice to Blacks by denying them the Priesthood.

In the introduction and throughout the body of his statement, Smith insisted that the Church is only acting on behalf of the Lord's commandment. Yet to conclude his

statement Smith declared that the reasons for Black Priesthood denial are unknown. From this the audience can assume that the Church is practicing Black Priesthood denial with complete blind faith. Smith's final sentence maintains pre-mortal existence as a plausible explanation for Black Priesthood denial. The conclusion of Smith's statement follows his structural plan. Throughout his statement, Smith justifies Black Priesthood denial by revealing Church beliefs. The conclusion reinforces the purpose of the statement by announcing that the Church will continue to practice Black Priesthood denial although it cannot assess why.

#### Supporting Materials

The sixth element, supporting materials, asks the critic to identify evidence used by the rhetor that describes, explains, enumerates, and proves the argument (Campbell 31). To support his argument, Smith emphasized his authority, the authority of the Lord, and former First Presidents Young and Woodruff. Using authority, suggest that Smith was depending on ethos to solidify his argument. For example, in an attempt to establish credibility, Smith depended on the high moral reputation of the Church to prove his argument. As already established, Smith held the highest office in the Church at the time of his statement. By stating that Black Priesthood denial was the Lords commandment, Smith depends on the authority of the Lord to

help interpret Church doctrine for the non-LDS audience. Immediately after explaining the Lord's position on Black Priesthood denial, Smith included statements made by former First Presidents Young and Woodruff. Both reaffirm Smith's initial sentence that Black Priesthood denial exists because of the Lord's commandment. By inflating his statement with quotations and names of authority figures Smith attempted to add credibility to his argument.

Describing the position of the Church, Smith included a story-like explanation of Black Priesthood denial. He asked his audience to keep in mind the doctrine on pre-mortal existence by explaining, ". . . the conduct of spirits in the pre-mortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality" (A #3). Smith further explains that entering a mortal state is such a great privilege for pre-mortal spirits that they are willing to "take on" Black bodies. Using this story-like description for supporting material, Smith asks his audience to focus on the existence of pre-mortal spirits as a reason for Black Priesthood denial. Smith does not use any scientific means to support his argument but depends solely on abstract religious concepts and the credibility of authority figures.

#### Strategies

The last element to be discussed is strategies. The strategies the rhetor uses are evident in selection of

language, appeals, and arguments made to overcome the rhetorical problem (Campbell 20). Campbell asks the critic to identify what strategies were used by the rhetor to reach the rhetorical goal. To make the LDS Church appear justified and steadfast in its decision to practice Black Priesthood denial, Smith's statement utilized selected language that represented strength or power. For example, when discussing the doctrine on Black Priesthood denial Smith chose phrases like, "direct commandment from the Lord," "operation of the principle," "remains as it has always stood," and "there is no injustice whatsoever." These declarations make evident the rigid position of the Church concerning Black Priesthood denial. Smith continued to use strong and powerful language when referring to former First Presidents of the Church as "Prophets of the Lord." His selection of language suggests that the LDS Church has rigid beliefs that are anything but imprudent (A #1,3).

In his statement, Smith made no attempt to appeal to the needs, drives, desires or cultural values of non-LDS individuals. His only attempt at explaining Black Priesthood denial was to quote former First Presidents and explain Church doctrine. Describing Black skin as a "handicap" in any context suggests limitations on an appeal to needs, desires, or cultural values. The following are techniques that Campbell identified for developing a persuasive argument:

1. Refutation: stating and opposing argument and showing its weakness;
  2. Enthymemes: presenting an argument in such a way that the audience participates in its completion;
  3. A fortiori argument: an argument that says, if it happens in that case, how much more likely it is to occur in this one;
  4. Allusion: a reference to historical events, literature, mythology, or cultural wisdom.
- (33).

Allusion is the only technique vaguely evident in Smith's statement. He quoted former First Presidents Young and Woodruff to solidify his argument. Immediately after quoting Young and Woodruff, Smith explained the doctrine of pre-mortal existence as the only explanation the Lord will allow the Church concerning Black Priesthood denial.

#### Summary

The purpose of the 1951 statement was to justify Black Priesthood denial to non-LDS individuals. The first sentence of the 1951 statement declared, "The attitude of the Church with reference to negroes remains as it has always stood" (A #1). Considering the purpose of this rhetorical act, one may ask, "What initially provoked a declaration of Church attitude?" Although the answer to that question is not directly evident in the text of the

statement, an explanation for it is the activity of pro-equality groups in Utah prior to August 17, 1951. The authoritative and rigid nature of Smith's statement suggests that the Church found it necessary to stifle the steadily growing protests against the Church. In addition to being authoritative and rigid, Smith's statement is also racist in nature. This researcher contends that the Church found its motivation to defend its practice of Black Priesthood denial in the verbose and militant protest actions against the Church. It is difficult to assess why Smith chose to use racist explanations for Black Priesthood denial if he was attempting to stifle protest actions. A possible explanation is perhaps he was ignorant of his own racist attitudes and the racist practices of his Church.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT

OF OCTOBER 6, 1963

##### External and Internal Pressures

This section will concentrate on the external and internal pressures surrounding the official statement of October 6, 1963.

In the late 1950s in Utah, many individuals dissatisfied with the legislature, blamed the LDS Church for the status of Blacks in the state. In 1959, the Utah State Advisory Committee on Civil Rights, initiated an investigation concerning the treatment of Blacks in Utah. The results of the study indicated that Utah Blacks faced

discrimination in housing and employment. The investigators stated that the discriminatory practices in Utah were largely due to the LDS church and its concepts of white racial superiority (Bringhurst 180). Arthur Richardson, a LDS writer who favored segregation, stated, ". . . there is no lack of that leadership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Today, as of old, His [Joseph Smith's] Church is in line with the preserved word of God. Its Living Oracles hold to the color line drawn by God" (qtd in Tanner 43). Statements like Richardson's caused many individuals to attack the LDS church for promoting white superiority. Assigning blame for the status of Blacks in Utah to the LDS Church became exceedingly evident in the late 1950s. David Oliver, a Black attorney, criticized the Church when he stated, "We all know that the major cause of discrimination against the Negro in Utah springs from a doctrine of the LDS Church which holds that the Negro is cursed and not entitled to the blessings of the Priesthood" (qtd in Tanner 14). Harmon C. Cole, a Black man living in Utah explained, "The Negro finds himself in a peculiar position in Utah; he has no stated laws of the Jim Crow type, but he still cannot act as a free citizen in his community. This is so because of the 'understood' discrimination against him" (qtd in Tanner 44). This "understood" discrimination was evident in the Utah legislature. Although the Utah legislature did repeal the

antimiscegenation law, it did not change any other aspect of discriminatory practices. Controversial statements made in defense of Black Priesthood denial added to ambivalent attitudes directed toward the Church. John Stewart, author of Mormonism and the Negro, explained that God was being merciful by not allowing Blacks to enter the Priesthood.

When a man has the Priesthood conferred upon him, Satan redoubles his efforts to destroy that man. Just think of the weapons, the tools, that Satan would have at his command, in the prejudices of the world against the Negro. Who is to say that in view of these factors, the Negro is not--so far as his temporal well being-- better off not to have the Priesthood? (50).

This attempt at appeasement was ineffective for civil rights activists concerned with removing racial prejudices and not accommodating them. Determined to fight for equality, civil rights activists organized protests against LDS Church leaders (Brigham 181). These activists threatened to picket Temple Square during the 1963 General Conference because they felt the Church was promoting anti-Black attitudes. NAACP chapters across the Nation were planning to protest outside LDS mission headquarters to support the Salt Lake City chapter in their fight for equality (Davidson 1185). The mounting pressure from the NAACP and threats of picketing Temple Square during General Conference prompted

Hugh B. Brown to make the Church's official statement concerning civil rights.

Statements by LDS believers, Lowry Nelson and Sterling McMurrin, epitomized the internal pressures the Church felt in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Nelson explained, "According to Mormon theology the status of the Negro on earth was determined in the 'pre-existent' state . . . This unfortunate policy of the church is a source of embarrassment and humiliation to thousands of its members . . ." (488). Giving a speech at the Trinity A.M.E. Church, McMurrin stated, ". . . Mormon people find themselves entertaining a religious doctrine of racial discrimination [Black Priesthood denial] which certainly is unworthy of a Church and unworthy of a religion and, I believe myself, unworthy of what is in many respects the praiseworthy and great tradition of the Mormon Church" (qtd in Tanner 52). Nelson and McMurrin are LDS believers who added to the mounting pressure for the Church to change its doctrine concerning Black Priesthood denial.

Jeff Nye, a young LDS believer concerned with the status of Blacks in the Church stated, "The Mormon Church taught me that the Negro was not equal to the white in terms of religious rights and opportunities. It taught me that the Negro was cursed with loss of God's priesthood and that the evidence, or mark, of this curse was his dark skin" (Look 75). Besides Nye's statement, Look published an

interview with First President Smith that confirmed the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. However, Smith defended the Church's position concerning Blacks by stating, "I would not want you to believe that we bear any animosity toward the Negro. Darkies are wonderful people, and they have their place in our Church" (William 78). Though the First President did not want anyone to believe that the Church felt animosity toward Blacks the turmoil both in and out of the Church did not end in 1963. Although the 1963 official statement did appease civil rights activists temporarily, the external and internal pressures were still evident during the six years that preceded the official statement of 1969.

#### Elements In Application

##### Purpose

President Hugh B. Brown, first counselor in the First Presidency, issued the official statement of October 6, 1963. There are two purposes evident in Brown's official statement. The first was to establish the Church's position on civil rights. Brown stated, "We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights . . ." (B #1). Brown's official statement is short and to the point. The conclusion argued is simply a declaration that the Church supports civil equality.

The second purpose was to establish a polarization

between Black Priesthood denial and the Church's position on civil rights. Strategically, Brown avoided mentioning Black Priesthood denial even though it was extremely pertinent to the subject matter. Brown stressed that Black individuals should be equal in employment, education, and citizenship, but refrained from including equality within the Church's hierarchal structure. By not including Black Priesthood denial as an issue of civil rights, Brown attempted to remove the Church from pro-equality protests.

Brown narrowed the subject in his official statement by addressing the Church's position on civil rights exclusively. He stated, "During recent months, both in Salt Lake City and across the nation, considerable interest has been expressed in the position of the Church . . . on the matter of civil rights" (B #1). By not mentioning any specific "interest expressed" Brown briefly discussed the Church's general position without extensive detail.

The desired response from the audience was for members to believe the LDS church upheld the Constitution and supported civil rights. Brown stated, "We have consistently and persistently upheld the Constitution of the United States, and as far as we are concerned, this means upholding the constitutional rights of every citizen . . ." (B #3). To develop believability Brown's strong declaration of the Church's position on the rights of every citizen excludes any mention of Black Priesthood denial.

### Audience

To influence the general American public, Brown made an appeal to their sense of patriotism by stating, ". . . it is a moral evil for any person or group of persons to deny any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege according to the dictates of his own conscience" (B #2). Brown, in an attempt to influence his audience, suggested a positive image of the Church by focusing on the basic patriotic desires of most Americans. Brown expected his audience to play the role of activist, and encouraged all "men everywhere, both within and outside of the Church" to commit themselves to the fight for civil equality (B #4). This call to action, intended for a patriotic caring audience, allows the Church to be viewed positively.

### Persona

Brown developed his argument by adopting the persona of a competent or knowledgeable spokesman for the Church. Brown spoke for the Church when he declared that it upheld the Constitution. Although his persona is that of a competent or knowledgeable spokesman for the Church his message is somewhat confusing. Brown attempted to rally all men together everywhere to fight for civil equality. Brown suggested that defeat was inevitable if men do not work together for civil equality and the "ideals of the brotherhood of man." By referring to man as a "brotherhood"

one embodies a feeling of oneness that embraces all persons. However, the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial is the antithesis of oneness. Although Brown's statement suggested that he adopted the role of a competent and knowledgeable spokesman, the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial undermines his argument of civil equality.

### Tone

#### The Attitude Toward The Subject

While explaining the Church's position, Brown's attitude toward the subject is hypocritical. His hypocrisy was evident in the following phrases: "regardless of race, color, or creed," and "the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity" (B #1,2). These phrases illustrated Brown's attempt to present the Church as an institution fighting for civil equality. However, due to the practice of Black Priesthood denial one can only view Brown's argument as hypocritical. The fundamental reason that Brown's attitude toward the subject was hypocritical was because he suggested that the Church possessed characteristics and beliefs in regards to civil equality that it did not. He repeatedly characterized the Church as a pious and virtuous institution fighting for civil rights disregarding the fact that its own practices deny equality in the Church due to skin color.

#### The Attitude Toward The Audience

Two different attitudes toward the audience were

evident in Brown's statement. First, his statement was very misleading as he attempted to convince the audience that the Church supports civil equality. Second, he attempted to remain guarded and simplistic to avoid any confusion concerning the Church's position.

Brown's attitude of hypocrisy toward the subject established his misleading tone toward the audience. He elaborated on the very basic arguments of civil equality such as "civil equality for all God's children", and "all men are the children of the same God" (B #2,4). Brown recognized the elementary elements of the Constitution but ignored the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. If one is to believe that all people are God's children and thus equal, then the Church's Priesthood should not be withheld from anyone due to skin color. Perhaps, because his argument was intentionally misleading, Brown's attitude toward the audience also could be interpreted as simplistic and guarded. By remaining simplistic, Brown attempted to make it difficult for his audience to misconstrue the position of the Church. Brown indicated that in Salt Lake City and across the Nation audiences expressed an interest in the Church's position on civil rights. To put the subject to rest, Brown stated as simply as he could that the Church "upheld the Constitution of the United States" (B #3).

### Structure

To introduce the subject of Brown's statement, he acknowledged external pressure in Salt Lake City and across the Nation. Although Brown recognized external pressure against the Church, he neglected to identify the source of the pressure. For example, Brown stated that an interest "had been expressed" in the position of the Church concerning civil rights but he avoided any details of that expression. Brown quickly moved away from the recognition of external pressures by not elaborating on them. Instead, he immediately stated the Church's position on civil rights.

We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed. (B #1)

Brown immediately narrowed the subject to the position of the Church without further recognition to external pressures. This strategy compels the audience to concentrate on the patriotic position of the Church and not the external pressures that prompted the announcement.

Brown organized the body of the statement through topical development. The body of Brown's statement maintained the topic of civil equality but explored different aspects of it. First, Brown reiterated the position of the Church: "We say again, as we have said many

times before, that we believe that all men are the children of the same God . . ." (B #2). Second, Brown moved away from the position of the Church to say that "any person or group of persons" that denies any human being civil equality is guilty of committing a moral evil. Finally, Brown concluded the body by listing the privileges all human beings have a right to practice. Topical development solidifies Brown's explanation of the Church's position because it allows him to maintain his subject while including aspects outside of the Church as well. To conclude, Brown restated the position of the Church and made a request for action. He declared, "We call upon all men, everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality . . ." (B #4). This request reinforced Brown's position by making the Church seem strong enough in its beliefs to commit to the establishment of civil equality.

#### Supporting Materials

Brown did not rely on evidence to solidify his argument. The only supporting material Brown used in his announcement is the authority of the Constitution. Much of Brown's statement reads like the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Fourteenth Amendment lists life, liberty, property, privileges, and immunities as the rights of an individual protected by due process of law. Comparably, Brown argued that every human being should have

the privileges of citizenship, employment, and education, regardless of race, color, or creed. Brown stated that the Church upheld the Constitution for every citizen of the United States. Using a revered document like the Constitution brings evidence to Brown's attempt at establishing credibility for the Church.

#### Strategies

Brown used patriotic language to make the Church seem non-racist. Phrases like, "enjoyment of civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed," "all men are children of the same God," "privilege of citizenship," exemplified the basic ideals of most Americans. Brown's use of patriotic language attempted to establish a feeling of unity and equality that can have a positive impact on his audience.

Appeals to cultural values are evident throughout Brown's statement. Brown depicted the United States Constitution as a revered document that symbolized the values of Americans. He focused on the American audience and made appeals to its sense of unity and standards. By appealing to American cultural values Brown attempted to eliminate any polarization between the American public and the Church.

He used an enthymeme as a persuasive strategy in his argument. Brown realized that it was not enough to just recognize the problem of civil inequality. In addition to

appealing to cultural values, Brown needed to convince his audience of the Church's sincerity. He did this by asking his audience to ". . . commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality" (B #4). This persuasive technique used by Brown, asked the audience to participate in and complete the rhetor's argument (Campbell 33).

#### Summary

The official statement of October 6, 1963, marked the second attempt the LDS Church made to stifle activists protesting Black Priesthood denial. Brown ambiguously acknowledged the protests against the Church by stating, ". . . considerable interest has been expressed in the position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the matter of civil rights" (B #1). Based on the findings in the analysis, this researcher argues that Brown's statement on civil equality was an attempt to quiet protesters and protect the Church from negative publicity, although the statement lacked sincerity. To avoid addressing the issue of Black Priesthood denial, Brown attempted to minimize the protest activity against the Church by referring to it as "considerable interest." Brown made an extreme effort to improve public relations for the Church by establishing the Church's position on civil rights. Brown strategically made no reference to Black individuals or the Church's belief in pre-mortal existence to win favor from the disconcerted

protesters. By directing the audience's focus away from the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial Brown attempted to convince his audience that the Church did not practice racist doctrine. This researcher finds that the efforts Brown made to establish the Church as non-racist was a direct result of societies changing value system. For example, in order for the Church to be viewed positively by the public, Brown's rhetorical act adopted the language and attitudes most accepted by pro-equality organizations. Unlike the 1951 statement, Brown refrains from making any remarks that could be misinterpreted as racist in nature. The accommodating nature of Brown's statement solidifies this researcher's belief that the Church fell victim to external and internal pressures.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE OFFICIAL STATEMENT

OF DECEMBER 15, 1969

##### External and Internal Pressures

For two years after Brown's 1963 statement civil rights activists exerted no external pressure on the Church. However, in 1965, activists again protested the Church because the Utah legislature remained reluctant to implement civil rights legislation (Bringhurst 181). Many felt that the abundance of LDS believers that held positions in Utah's legislature were responsible for the lack of civil rights laws. Rumors of Blacks "converging" on Salt Lake City posed a threat to the LDS Church. O. Kendall White and Daryl

White explained the turmoil of October 1965.

The rumors during the late sixties found Black Panthers and hippies awaiting to descend on the city to destroy the Temple. An apocryphal prophecy, which church authorities subsequently repudiated, legitimated rumors of a racial war (233). This hysteria allowed the LDS church leaders to focus on external forces and to avoid coming to terms with the Church's racial policy (White and White 234).

Incidentally, until Utah changed its anti-Black legislation, the NAACP threatened to hold marches at Temple Square.

This threat prompted Church officials to reprint their 1963 official statement in the Deseret News. The reprint of the pro-civil rights statement did not appease the activists, and to avoid any demonstrations on Church property, the legislature enacted the new public accommodations act and a fair employment act (Davidson 1185).

Civil rights activists, recognizing their efforts as the impetus behind the change in Utah legislature, began focusing on changing the doctrine on Black Priesthood denial. In 1966, Jim Todd of the University of Utah, explained the implications of Black Priesthood denial for white LDS individuals.

The tragedy of this denial of the LDS priesthood is not that it is unfair to the handful of Negroes actually in the LDS church . . . People who have

been taught since childhood that the Negroes are "cursed by God" and therefore the priesthood, probably find it perfectly natural to conclude that Negroes must be inferior. (qtd in Tanner 42)

Wallace Turner elaborated on the belief that Black Priesthood denial affected LDS believers and non-believers by stating,

A devout Mormon never really leaves his religious shell as he goes about his life in the secular world. So he never really leaves the feeling that Black skin makes a man inferior. This means that the LDS Church actually is one of the most influential organs of racial bigotry in the United States. (244)

The attitudes of Todd and Turner are examples of the growing discontent in the late 1960s concerning the Church's practice of Black priesthood denial.

Attempting to initiate a change in Church practice, activists began focusing their protest activities on the athletic teams of the LDS operated Brigham Young University (B.Y.U.) and the LDS missionary service. B.Y.U. sporting events became combat zones for protesters who disagreed with the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial.

Heinerman and Shupe quoted White and White as stating,

Sports events provided the context for protests, boycotts, disrupted games, mass demonstrations, and 'riots' . . . Administrators, already embroiled in

student demonstrations over Vietnam, began to separate themselves from the Mormon School. (69)

The late 1960s found no Black athletes on any of the athletic teams at B.Y.U. Activists found the lack of Black athletes to be yet another example of LDS racist attitudes. Pressure mounted as students began to wear Black armbands to football games in protest of Black Priesthood denial. Black athletes refused to play against B.Y.U., deeming it a racist school (qtd in Tanner 47). Nearly every game the B.Y.U. football team played met with demonstrations and riots. In defense of B.Y.U., a fullback named Nichols stated, "I have never seen anything like that. I looked out the bus window and saw those people carrying signs, cutting the church. I think that's worse than what they accuse us of" (qtd in Tanner 48). B.Y.U., always known for its exceptional athletic teams, began to lose nearly every athletic event during the demonstrations. By the end of 1969, Stanford University refused to play B.Y.U. in any sporting events because of the Church's racist practices. Protesters threatened that demonstrations held at B.Y.U. sporting events would continue until the LDS Church changed its doctrine on Black Priesthood denial (Tanner).

In 1965, the NAACP initiated a campaign to refuse LDS missionaries visas to predominately non-white countries. This protest action upset the Church because LDS-believers hold the missionary service in high regard. LeGrand

Richards explained the magnitude of the missionary service by stating,

The number of missionaries is increasing, and shall continue to increase until the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God . . . . The missionary program of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is one of the greatest spiritual movements and undertakings this world has ever known.

(260)

Outraged by the anti-Black practices of the Church the NAACP began petitioning foreign embassies to refuse to grant visas to LDS missionaries (qtd in Tanner 46). The inability to send missionaries to other countries caused not only spiritual hardship for the LDS Church but economic as well. Over half of all LDS converts join the Church because of efforts by the Church's missionaries. Consequently, limiting where the missionaries could go threatened the public image of the Church and its growth. The efforts of a few active protesters convinced the Nigerian government to refuse LDS missionaries visas to the country (Davidson 1186). Because of Nigeria's refusal to grant LDS missionaries visas, an abundance of negative press reports began circulating depicting the Church as a racist institution. Davidson explained the effects of these negative press reports on the Church.

Most of the Mormon hierarchy did not regret

their inability to send missionaries into "Black Africa" nearly as much as they regretted the unfavorable publicity. (1184)

The NAACP threatened to continue petitioning governments to refuse missionaries visas until the Church changed its doctrine on "non-white inferiority" (qtd in Tanner 46).

Remaining an activist and a source of internal pressure for the Church, Sterling McMurrin spoke at the 1968 NAACP convention. McMurrin's address depicted his Church as a morally deficient institution because of its practice of Black priesthood denial. He stated,

For a Church that less than a century ago was aggressively committed to the achievement of social justice to have receded so far from the frontiers of social morality, while at the same time its political power and influence have materially increased, is nothing less than a major tragedy. (6)

McMurrin maintained that: ". . . there is no official Church doctrine stating that the Negro is under a divine curse" (qtd in Trank 223). McMurrin concluded his speech by stating,

I firmly believe that the time will come when the Mormon people for the most part will have abandoned their crude superstitions about Negroes--their children will force them to--and when the Church will have a new vision of universal brotherhood and social justice

(12).

McMurrin's strong opinion concerning the Church's policy on Black Priesthood denial generated controversy in the Church. Although non-LDS believers wrote letters supporting his attitudes concerning the Church, McMurrin received letters from LDS believers that were not supportive. The hostility that LDS believers felt toward McMurrin for his anti-LDS speech was evident in the letters he received from them. L.K. Williams, a member of the LDS Church stated, ". . . prerogative to personally make any judgement about the correctness of this or any other Church doctrine. . . . you ought to be more prudent in your public statements and exhibit greater intellectual integrity." McMurrin also received an abundance of unsigned letters, one of which stated, "I note you claim to be a Mormon. It so happens that Mormonism does not teach what you are teaching. Maybe you would do well to find out what you are if you have enough intelligence to do so which I doubt very much" (qtd in Trank). McMurrin's speech given in 1968 at the NAACP convention caused his Church negative publicity and embarrassment. Prior to the official statement of December 15, 1969, McMurrin, with many concerned LDS believers began "blasting" Black Priesthood denial and demanded change from the Church with more vengeance than before (Bringhurst 184). The sometimes militant actions by the NAACP and civil rights activists, and the rising discontent from concerned LDS

believers help explain the growing demand for the Church to change its anti-Black practice.

#### Elements in Application

##### Purpose

Presidents Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselors in the First Presidency, issued the official statement of December 15, 1969. The purpose of Brown and Tanner's statement was to end the demonstrations by pro-equality groups against the Church. They illustrated their purpose in three ways. First, Brown and Tanner attempted to establish that the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial had nothing to do with civil rights. Second, they explained the Church's belief in continuous prophecy. Finally, the authors strived to depict the Church as loving and compassionate toward Blacks.

Regarding the first example, Brown and Tanner stated, "The position of The Church Of Jesus Christ Of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race who choose to join the Church falls wholly within the category of religion. It has no bearing upon the matter of civil rights" (C #7). Brown and Tanner further their purpose by stating, "Therefore, if they [non-believers] feel we have no priesthood, they should have no concern with any aspect of our theology on priesthood so long as that theology does not deny any man his Constitutional privileges" (C #8). Brown and Tanner establish their belief that doctrines practiced

in the Church should be of no concern to non-members.

The second example evident was the author's attempt to explain the Church's belief in continuous prophecy. They stated,

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes its origin, its existence, and its hope for the future to the principles of continuous revelation. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God. (C #9)

The purpose of discussing the Church's belief in continuous prophecy was to appease pro-equality groups. By explaining that prophetic change exists and is the very existence of the Church, Brown and Tanner attempted to displace blame from the Church and assign responsibility to God for Black Priesthood denial. They utilized this strategy in an effort to thwart protest actions against the Church.

The last example evident in Brown and Tanner's statement is their attempt to depict the Church as loving and compassionate toward Blacks. Again this seems to be a direct response to pro-equality groups that attacked the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. Throughout their statement, Brown and Tanner empathize with the plight of the Black race and extend a "hand of friendship to men everywhere" (C #15). In an effort to win favor from their

audience, the authors praised their "Negro brothers and sisters."

We feel nothing but love, compassion, and the deepest appreciation for the rich talents, endowments, and the earnest strivings of our Negro brothers and sisters.

We are eager to share with men of all races the blessings of the Gospel. We have no racially-segregated congregations. (C #12)

These sentences illustrated Brown and Tanner's attempt to generate favor for the Church. In addition, Brown and Tanner identified the Church with Black individuals by stating the Church was persecuted and oppressed, just as Blacks were.

Brown and Tanner narrow the subject of their statement by addressing the position of Blacks and the Church. Throughout the statement, the authors discuss the Church's position on the status of Blacks, and Black Priesthood denial. To address the confusion that had arisen Brown and Tanner explained, ". . . it was decided at a meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve to restate the position of the Church with regard to the Negro both in society and in the Church" (C #1). Although Brown and Tanner refer to the 1963 statement that concentrated on the position of the Church regarding Blacks, their 1969 statement offered a more detailed explanation. To mollify those confused about the Church's position the authors

extended their statement beyond the civil rights question and offered an explanation for their belief system.

Brown and Tanner sought to establish a uniform understanding of Church doctrine. The response desired from the audience was to acknowledge an understanding of the Church's position on Blacks. An audience could demonstrate its understanding by accepting Black Priesthood denial as a religious practice separate from the laws on civil rights. Brown and Tanner offered an extensive explanation of Church practices and beliefs to insure a clear understanding from the audience. They explained, ". . . Negroes, while spirit children of a common Father, and the progeny of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, were not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not made fully known to man" (C #10). This explanation asks the audience to understand that Black Priesthood denial has nothing to do with civil rights but has everything to do with God's will.

#### Audience

Regarding audience addressed, Brown and Tanner addressed their statement to Church officials, but it is apparent from the text of the statement that the targeted audience extends far beyond those who are Church officials. The information and explanations of Church beliefs provided throughout the statement were surprisingly basic. For example, Brown and Tanner mentioned Joseph Smith in their

statement and explained that he was "the first prophet of the Church" and that he lived from "1805-1844". It is safe to assume that men holding the highest offices in the Church would already know this information. Another example of simplicity in the statement is evident when Brown and Tanner refer to the Church as "The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" instead of "our Church." Perhaps Brown and Tanner were offering an explanation for Black Priesthood denial that the high officials could refer to when explaining Church practices to non-believers. If all the high officials used the explanation provided by Brown and Tanner in their statement, then the Church's practices would appear sound and ultimately more tangible to non-believers.

Another target audience is apparent in Brown and Tanner's statement and that is non-believers concerned with the position taken by the Church. The basic instructional nature of Brown and Tanner's statement suggested a desire to inform the ignorant non-believer about the Church's position concerning the status of Blacks. For example, the authors attempted to explain the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial when they stated: "Our living prophet President David O. McKay, has said, 'The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God . . .'" (C #11). This attempt to mollify non-believers brings evidence to the contention that the

authors target audience extended far beyond Church officials.

### Persona

Brown and Tanner adopted several roles in their statement. First, the authors adopted the role of victim. They explain the tragic beginnings of the Church by stating, "We say that we know something of the sufferings of those who are discriminated against . . . Our early history as a Church is a tragic story of persecution and oppression. Our people repeatedly were denied protection of the law. They were driven and plundered, robbed and murdered by mobs . . ." (C #2). In these sentences Brown and Tanner liken the suffering of the Church to the suffering of Blacks. By using "we" when discussing the history of the Church the authors appeared to have suffered oppression because of unjust men as their ancestors did. As Brown and Tanner moved from a historical explanation of the Church the oppressor is no longer man, but God. After an extensive explanation of Black Priesthood denial the authors stated, "President McKay has also said, 'Sometime in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood.' Until God reveals His will in this matter, to him whom we sustain as a prophet, we are bound by that same will" (C #11). Brown and Tanner illustrated their role as victims and the victimization of the Church by portraying unjust men and the will of God as oppressive forces.

Second, Brown and Tanner adopted the role of historical educators. It is apparent that the authors attempted to solidify their argument by educating their audience on specific historical aspects of the Church and the United States Constitution. They stated, "In revelations received by the first prophet of the Church in this dispensation, Joseph Smith (1805-1944), the Lord made it clear that it is "not right that any man should be in bondage one to another." These words were spoken prior to the Civil War. From these and other revelations have sprung the Church's deep and historic concern with man's free agency and our commitment to the sacred principles of the Constitution" (C #4). To further their persona as historical educators, Brown and Tanner extended their argument beyond the history of their Church to the Constitution with the following sentences: ". . . matters of faith, conscience and theology are not within the purview of the civil law. The first amendment to the Constitution specifically provides that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'" (C #6). Brown and Tanner spoke as historical educators to remind pro-equality groups that the practices of the LDS Church are protected by the Constitution.

The last apparent persona that the authors adopted was that of LDS theologians. After reminding the audience that the Constitution protects Church practices, the authors then

dedicated the rest of their statement to establishing the beliefs of the Church. They explained the Church's position on Black Priesthood denial when they stated, "Until God reveals His will in this matter, to him whom we sustain as a prophet, we are bound by that same will. Priesthood, when it is conferred on any man, comes as a blessing from God, not of men" (C #11). It is apparent throughout the last ten paragraphs that Brown and Tanner attempted to justify their Church's practices by explaining the religious foundations that defend the practice of Black Priesthood denial.

Strategically, Brown and Tanner adopted three personas-- victims, historical educators, and LDS theologians--to stifle the activity of pro-equality groups. Depending solely on their credibility, the three persona's adopted by the authors served the following purposes: 1) To provoke sympathy; 2) To establish the Church's Constitutional rights; 3) To establish that it is God's will that the Church practiced Black Priesthood denial.

#### Tone

##### The Attitude Toward The Subject

Brown and Tanner explained in detail the position of the Church on Blacks and Black Priesthood denial. A shrewd tone is evident in the statement. Directly to the point, Brown and Tanner illustrated a sharp, poignant understanding of the confusion regarding the position of the Church. Shrewdness is evident when Brown and Tanner explained the

Constitutional rights of the Church: "The first amendment to the Constitution specifically provides that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.' The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race . . . wholly falls within the category of religion" (C #7). If a person believes that freedom of religion is a constitutional right, then Brown and Tanner's crucial point exempts the Church from a civil rights violation. Brown and Tanner directed another keen argument toward non-believers that oppose Black Priesthood denial.

Without prejudice they [non-believers] should grant us the privilege afforded under the Constitution to exercise our chosen form of religion just as we must grant all others a similar privilege (C #14).

By forcing non-believers to perceive protest actions against the Church as unconstitutional, Brown and Tanner attempted to reduce antagonism concerning the practice of Black Priesthood denial.

When considering the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial and attitudes adopted in previous official statements concerning Black Priesthood denial, a spurious attitude toward the subject also is apparent. Throughout their statement, Brown and Tanner attempted to empathize

with the plight of the Black race; they declared, "First, may we say that we know something of the sufferings of those who are discriminated against . . ." (C #1). Empathizing with the discrimination against Black people and characterizing members of the Church as victims can be depicted as spurious when one remembers that the Church promoted racist practices. The authors eagerly share an emotive extension of gratitude in the following sentences:

We feel nothing but love, compassion, and the deepest appreciation for the rich talents, endowments, and the earnest strivings of our Negro brothers and sisters.

We are eager to share with men of all races the blessings of the Gospel. We have no racially-segregated congregations. (C #12)

Brown and Tanner stated that the Church had no racially-segregated congregations but avoided explaining that the Church did practice racial segregation as to the Priesthood. Although the authors do eventually explain Black Priesthood denial, they allot all responsibility for the Church's racist practices to God. It is difficult to accept that the First Presidency appreciated Black individuals when they refused them the Priesthood because their skin was not white.

#### The Attitude Toward The Audience

The authors adopted an illusive attitude toward the audience. Brown and Tanner attempted to deceive their

audience by misrepresenting the position of the Church. It is difficult to recognize any sincerity in Brown and Tanner's statement due to the fact that they made an extreme effort to empathize with Black discrimination yet the Church continued its own racist practice of Black Priesthood denial. They wanted their audience to believe that the Church considered individuals of all races to be equal brothers and sisters of God yet skin color prohibited Blacks from attaining equality in the Church. Brown and Tanner asked their audience to believe that the Church supported full Constitutional rights for Black individuals. However, the authors then argued that the Constitution protects the Church's racist religious practice of Black Priesthood when they stated, "However, matters of faith, conscience, and theology are not within the purview of the civil law. The first amendment to the Constitution specifically provides that 'Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment or religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof'" (C #6). Laden with contradictory declarations, one must question the sincerity of Brown and Tanner's statement.

#### Structure

In the introduction of their statement, Brown and Tanner alert the audience that a conflict had arisen concerning the position of the Church. Immediately following their declaration of a conflict, the authors describe the suffering of the Church. By introducing their

statement with a story of suffering, Brown and Tanner established recognizable similarities between members of the Church and the oppressed Blacks in society. This strategy not only gained the audiences attention but initiated the perspective the authors intended the audience to have.

Brown and Tanner's introduction suggests that they are sympathizers of oppression and that they uphold the Constitution. The body of Brown and Tanner's statement included topical, and logical development. Topically, the authors discussed the support the Church offered Blacks in society, the Church's constitutional right to religious practices, and the Church's position on Black Priesthood denial. Brown and Tanner stated, "It follows, therefore, that we believe the Negro, as well as those of other races, should have his full Constitutional privileges as a member of society, and we hope that members of the Church everywhere will do their part as citizens to see that these rights are held inviolate" (C #5). The authors then stated the Church's constitutional right to practice its religion. They include three explanatory sentences that summarize their argument.

The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race who choose to join the Church falls wholly within the category of religion. It has no bearing upon matters of civil rights. In no case or degree does it deny the Negro

his full privileges as a citizen (C #7).

These sentences introduce the argument that the Constitution protects the Church's practices just as it should protect "Negroes" rights. To conclude the body, Brown and Tanner explained that Black Priesthood denial is not a doctrine made by man. Logically, Brown and Tanner organize their argument by introducing a problem and offering a solution. The problem the authors introduce is the confusion the audience has concerning the Church's position regarding Blacks in society and in the Church. Asking the audience to separate freedom of religion from civil rights was the solution offered. Brown and Tanner also ask that their audience wait until God reveals his will concerning Black Priesthood denial.

The first paragraph in the conclusion of Brown and Tanner's statement reiterates the premise that the Constitution protects the Church and allows them the right to enforce Black Priesthood denial. The second paragraph invites all men everywhere to join the Church. The third paragraph extends a wish to all men in the world that they might enjoy the blessings of Jesus Christ. The final paragraph of the conclusion asks the audience for understanding and reinforcement for religious differences. The author's lengthy conclusion reinforces the defense of the Church by restating the purpose and extending a welcome to all men everywhere.

### Supporting Materials

To support their argument, Brown and Tanner emphasize the authority of the current Prophet, David O. McKay and former Prophet Joseph Smith. Brown and Tanner included the opinions of Smith concerning slavery and Black Priesthood denial to establish a positive relationship with the audience. Concerning slavery, Brown and Tanner quoted Smith as saying that it was: "Not right that any man should be in bondage one to another" (C #4). The author's rely on Smith's sentence to enforce the Church's belief that all men should be treated equally. Following Smith's sentence on slavery, Brown and Tanner stated, "From these and other revelations have sprung the Church's deep and historic concern with man's free agency and our commitment to the sacred principles as a member of society" (C #4). Brown and Tanner do not include any other revelations concerning the Church's position on slavery but depend on the authority of Smith to solidify their position.

Brown and Tanner chose to include the authority of the Church's living Prophet McKay to discuss the position on Black Priesthood denial. The authors quote McKay as saying, "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God . . . Revelation assures us that this plan antedates man's mortal existence extending back to man's pre-existent state" (C #11). The authors depended

upon the authority of the living Prophet to add credibility to the arguments concerning Black Priesthood denial.

Brown and Tanner also use an analogy to support their argument. The entire second paragraph of the statement explained the suffering and pain that the Church had to endure in its early history. The authors do not say the suffering of the Church is comparable to the suffering of Blacks. However, preceding the story of suffering the authors stated, "In view of confusion that has arisen, it was decided at a meeting . . . to restate the position of the Church with regard to the Negro both in society and in the Church" (C #1). From this introductory statement the audience can assume that the Church compared itself with Blacks.

#### Strategies

Through language Brown and Tanner attempted to quiet protestors. Although the authors are steadfast in their defense of the Church's right to enjoy religious freedoms, they extended a "hand of friendship" throughout the statement. Brown and Tanner chose phrases like, "love, compassion, and the deepest appreciation", "We are eager to share with men of all races", "the hand of fellowship", "we should love one another", and "children of one Father" when discussing the relationship between the Church and all others. Brown and Tanner used language acceptable to protest groups in an effort to stifle discontent and end the controversy against Black Priesthood denial.

The authors also use compassionate language when making appeals to the audience. Brown and Tanner asked that the audience understand the Church's right to practice its religion without discrimination from civil rights protestors. As the civil rights movement pushed for equality among all people, Brown and Tanner made the appeal that Black Priesthood denial was "a matter of religion and not a matter of Constitutional right" (C #14). Throughout their statement, Brown and Tanner appealed to the audience's sense of fairness and equality. The authors asked that if one accepts Constitutional rights for all, then one must honor the Church's right to religious freedom. Brown and Tanner argued that the Church's doctrine had nothing to do with civil rights, and therefore, should not be included in the fight for civil equality. This argument was an attempt to divert protest actions away from the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial.

The authors used an allusion to support their argument. Brown and Tanner discussed the tragic history of the Church to illustrate their understanding of the plight of Blacks. The authors stated, "Our early history as a church is a tragic story of persecution and oppression. Our people repeatedly were denied the protection of the law. They were driven and plundered, robbed and murdered by mobs . . ." (C #2). The authors alluded to the suffering of the Church as comparable to the suffering of Blacks to quiet the conflicts

that had arisen against the Church.

#### Summary

The official statement of December 15, 1969, illustrated vividly the antagonism felt by the Church. Although the official statement of 1963 mollified protesters for a short time, the Church recognized the need to reestablish its beliefs again in 1969. Addressing protest actions against the Church as "confusion" that had arisen, Brown and Tanner's statement epitomized the vulnerability of the Church. Nearing a new decade, civil rights activists became more militant in their protests and were much harder for the Church to stifle. The most noticeable difference between the official statement of 1963 and the official statement of 1969 is the word choice and language used. For example, in 1963, Brown could mollify protesters with patriotic language while completely ignoring the issue of Black Priesthood denial. In 1969, in light of the external and internal pressures that were mounting against the Church, Brown and Tanner directly established the Church's position on civil rights and Black Priesthood denial. Another difference between the two official statements is length. The statement of 1963 consisted of four short paragraphs and the statement of 1969 consisted of seventeen paragraphs. The length of the 1969 statement suggests that Church officials knew that protesters were no longer satisfied with short ambiguous explanations for Black

Priesthood denial. Because of the militant protests and societies rapidly changing values concerning Blacks this researcher feels that the audience of non-LDS believers demanded the official statement of 1969 be thorough in its explanation of Church practice. Acknowledging the external and internal pressures against the Church, Brown and Tanner delivered an official statement laden with justifications for Church policy. Their official statement suggests a desire to end the antagonism against the LDS Church for its practice of Black Priesthood denial. Brown and Tanner were ineffective, however, because protesters were no longer interested in justifications for Church practice. Protestors vowed to continue actions against the Church until the denial for Blacks to enter the Priesthood no longer existed.

#### Analysis Of The Official Statement

Of June 8, 1978

#### External and Internal Pressures

Prior to the revelation that changed the status of Blacks in the Church, protests against the Church forcefully continued. The external pressure that focused on B.Y.U. began to diminish around 1970, but NAACP and civil rights activists did not end their protests actions against the Church. The negative publicity generated by the NAACP and dissonant LDS members spread anti-LDS attitudes throughout the United States. In October of 1972, the New York City

Planning Commission granted permission for the Church to build a 38-story luxury apartment complex near Lincoln Center. Black residents that lived near the construction area began protesting to forbid the Church to construct a "visual reminder" of the Church's prejudicial attitudes toward Blacks. After Black residents ended their protests, the LDS Church compensated a Black man for his property and resumed building the luxury apartment complex (Bringham 182). The incident in New York City only caused the Church more negative attention. Two years after the construction area protest, the NAACP focused its attention on the LDS sponsored Boy Scouts of America. Unsatisfied with the rule that Black men were not eligible to hold the position of senior patrol leader, the NAACP began protesting against the Church. Since Black men could not be president of a Deacon's Quorum they could not hold positions of authority in a LDS sponsored Boy Scout Troop. The NAACP filed suit against the Church demanding that the Church reveal all policies concerning Blacks. To protect Church policy and to avoid unwanted publicity, the Church reversed its rule and began allowing Black men to hold the position of senior patrol leader (Bringham 183). Antagonism against the Church spread into nearly every function or organization that the Church sponsored. Black clergymen who protested the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial caused The Mormon Tabernacle Choir to cancel many of its out of state

appearances (Bringham 183).

Concerned with the image of the Church, Kimball hired Crescent, McCormick & Paget (CMP) a management and consulting firm to improve public relations. Between the years 1971 and 1975, CMP conducted many public relations studies for the Church. These studies attempted to aid the Church in improving business ventures and applying management perspectives. In 1975, CMP strongly advised the Church to change its policy on Black Priesthood denial. In their book, Heinerman and Shupe explained CMP's recommendations for the Church.

Most important, among the recommendations made by the consulting firm were "a careful review" of certain potentially embarrassing "doctrinal policies" such as the Negro issue and "a serious reconsideration" of such policies in light of past public relations problems that they had caused (71).

As the result of external pressure concerning Black Priesthood denial, Church leaders recognized the need to retain a company like CMP. Heinerman and Shupe asserted, "No other religious group in American society has conducted such a sustained campaign to gain public respectability, nor has such respectability been so integral a part of any other group's sense of its own destiny" (71). The concern of the LDS Church regarding its public image may have been due to all of the external pressure and negative publicity that it

experienced due to its policy on Black Priesthood denial.

The early 1970s marked extreme pressure for the Church to change its policy on Black Priesthood denial. This pressure was increasingly evident internally from members of the Church. Douglas Wallace and Byron Marchant were two LDS men that found the policy concerning Black Priesthood denial exceptionally distasteful. Wallace, a successful attorney and LDS High Priest, demonstrated his distaste for the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial by ordaining a Black man a Priest. Ordaining a Black man a Priest without regard to Church policy created a disturbance in the Church. Wallace, along with two companions unsuccessfully attempted to attend General Conference and demanded that the policy that denied Black men the right to enter the Priesthood be an issue for discussion. The Church excommunicated Wallace for ordaining a Black man a LDS Priest (Brigham 185). Wallace's excommunication from the Church only increased his desire to protest Church policy. After attempting to demonstrate at General Conference a second time, the Church filed a restraining order against Wallace. Although Wallace eventually stopped his militant protests against the Church, negative publicity flourished.

Marchant, another LDS man, began protesting Church policy in 1978. Marchant stood in front of Temple Square handing out handbills to the public and organizing a protest against the Church. After several arrests for trespassing,

the Church excommunicated Marchant (Brighamurst 186). Disregarding his excommunication and arrest, Marchant continued to organize protests against the Church that were of a militant nature. Gaining popularity, Marchant promised to stage a protest march on Temple Square at the October General Conference of 1978. In his handbill he stated,

Next October Conference (1978) I will join all interested in a march on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. In the event the Mormon Church decides to ordain worthy Afro-Americans to the priesthood this demonstrations will be a sort of celebration. A demonstration of support. In the meantime, every person and/or group concerned about Utah Racism is encouraged to speak out and attend the October protest.

(Marchant 2)

Confrontations and militant protests against the Church by Church members were a public embarrassment for the Church. Always concerned with public image, devout members of the Church began to accept the Church's policy on Black Priesthood denial less and less. In his book, Mormonism And The American Experience, Klaus Hansen explained that by the late 1970s the burden of enforcing LDS racial teachings was becoming "unfashionable" for LDS believers.

To professionally and academically successful Mormons, and to those who had political aspirations, especially, the Negro policy was

becoming an acute embarrassment (201).

The embarrassment some LDS believers felt in their Church's practices was not recognized as the reason the First Presidency supplicated the Lord. As discussed earlier the Prophet Kimball ended the external and internal struggle of the Church by extending privileges to all worthy men regardless of the color of their skin.

#### Elements In Application

##### Purpose

First President Spencer W. Kimball issued the last official statement concerning Black Priesthood denial. The purpose of his official statement was to announce that God had occasioned a revelation declaring "every faithful, worthy man" able to enter the Priesthood (D #3). The central idea of Kimball's statement was to announce the change in doctrine concerning Black Priesthood denial by disclosing his prophetic experience to the audience. While trying to develop a positive image for the Church, credit for supplicating the Lord for guidance concerning Black Priesthood denial was given to the great demand for LDS membership across the world. No recognition was given to the external and internal pressures that coincided with Kimball's statement. To offer recognition would defeat Kimball's purpose of lessening the impact of the protestors demands for change in the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial.

Kimball narrowed the subject of his statement by limiting it to the change in Church doctrine. Kimball stated, "Accordingly, all worthy male members of the church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color" (D #3). Kimball narrowed the subject by not listing specific races that could not enter the Priesthood before his revelation. The obvious response desired by Kimball was one of acceptance. Kimball stated that the Lord's decision to expand the Priesthood to every worthy man was not an easy one. He stated, "We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel" (D #4). In this statement Kimball clearly announced that the Church's decision to stop practicing Priesthood denial was a serious one. Addressing "with soberness" the change in the Church's controversial practice of Priesthood denial allowed the audience to find favor in the seriousness of the Church's decision. Kimball wanted the audience to believe that the change in Church practice was a revelation from the Lord that came after many hours of prayer.

#### Audience

Arguably, there are two intended audiences for Kimball's statement: 1) An audience of LDS believers, and 2) An audience of individuals that protested the Church's

practice of Black Priesthood denial and/or non-believers.

First, Kimball addressed his statement to the "brethren" of the Church, specifically Priesthood officers throughout the world (D #1). Kimball established that God, and many Prophets and Presidents of the LDS Church had promised that the day would come when males of all races would be allowed to enter the Priesthood. These sentences were directed toward LDS believers that accept the credibility of the Church's God and former Church leaders. Kimball intended to reaffirm the beliefs of his LDS audience with an explanation of the promises made by former officials in the Church. Kimball stressed the magnitude of his revelation and asked that Church officials accept their role and responsibilities within the Church.

He [God] has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that . . . every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood . . . Priesthood leaders are instructed to follow the policy of carefully interviewing all candidates for ordination . . . to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness (D #3).

The instructional nature of his statement indicated that Kimball was establishing a new practice for LDS believers to accept and believe in.

Second, Kimball addressed protestors and/or non-

believers as a target audience. Recognizing that the problem of Black Priesthood denial extended beyond the Church, the removal of that denial was of particular interest to protestors and/or non-believers who had been waiting for change. Kimball did not directly address his statement to those outside of the Church, but his explanation of why the First Presidency supplicated the Lord for guidance indicated an audience outside of the Church. For example, it seems feasible that LDS believers would not need an explanation from their Prophet as to why the Lord occasioned him a revelation. Protestors and non-believers, however, would not depend on the credibility of a Prophet they did not believe in and would require an explanation for the sudden change in such a controversial Church practice. The fact that Kimball stressed that the revelation was the word of the Lord, brings evidence to the belief that he avoided allotting credit for the change in Church practice to external and internal pressures.

#### Persona

Two personas were evident in Kimball's statement. First, Kimball adopted his literal role of Prophet and revelator. Second, he adopted the role of antagonist.

Throughout his official statement, Kimball speaks on behalf of his Presidents and the Lord. Although Kimball did not state how the Lord revealed to him that all worthy men could enter the Priesthood, he explained that he experienced

a revelation. Embodying his role as Prophet, Kimball stated, "He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood" (D #3). Kimball provided his audience with an explanation of the change in Church practice by relying on his ability to have direct communication with the Lord.

Kimball's second persona is that of antagonist. Although it was not necessary, Kimball chose to offer an explanation as to why the First Presidency was inspired to supplicate the Lord for the change in the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. Completely disregarding the nearly forty years of external and internal pressures against the Church for its racist practice, Kimball allotted credit for change to the Church's expansion. By doing this, the message Kimball sent to protestors was that protest actions against the Church were done in vain. He antagonized protestors by suggesting to them that supplication to the Lord for change came only when change would benefit the Church, economically and spiritually. By creating the image that the Church was unaffected by external and internal pressures, Kimball attempted to solidify the Church's argument. Kimball attempted to confirm that Black Priesthood denial was God's will and He occasioned a revelation when the reasons for change glorified the Church.

ToneAttitude Toward The Subject

Although his statement declared that a revelation was occasioned, Kimball's attitude toward the subject is ambiguous. The lack of information that Kimball allowed his audience was apparent throughout his statement. One must be familiar with Church practices and structure in order to understand much of Kimball's argument. For example, he initially discussed the expansion "of the work of the Lord over the earth" but refrained from explaining where (D #1). Due to the fact that the First Presidency supplicated the Lord to change the practice of Black Priesthood denial, one can assume that the nations where expansion increased were predominately Black countries. Logically, Kimball may have intentionally remained ambiguous concerning which nations were responding to the Lord's message in an effort to avoid depicting the Church as economically and spiritually greedy. Coincidentally, if the Church removed its practice of Black Priesthood denial, then missionaries could solicit more members and more members would generate more economic and spiritual growth for the Church. Remaining ambiguous, Kimball was able to avoid explaining how Church expansion was relevant to Black Priesthood denial.

Ambiguity toward the subject was also evident in that Kimball did not state that he personally received the revelation from the Lord. One must be familiar with the

Church's belief that a Prophet receives a revelation in order to understand that Kimball received the revelation. He stated, "He has heard our Prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come. . ." (D #3). Perhaps in an effort to appear humble and add credibility to his position as Prophet, Kimball refrains from announcing that he directly received the Lords confirmation.

#### Attitude Toward The Audience

Because two target audiences were identified, it is apparent that Kimball developed two separate attitudes toward the audiences. For LDS believers, Kimball's attitude was instructive and informative. His attitude toward protestors and non-believers, however, was uncaring.

Kimball does not address his LDS audience as peers because he is the Prophet of the Church. Kimball informed his audience that the First Presidency prayed for God to assist them about Priesthood denial.

. . . we have pleaded long and earnestly . . .  
spending many hours in the Upper Room of the  
Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance  
(D #2).

After informing the audience on the procedures that preceded the revelation, Kimball instructed Priesthood leaders to follow Church procedure when interviewing the new candidates for the Priesthood. Kimball's instructive and informative tone solidifies his role as Prophet and moral adviser.

An uncaring attitude toward protestors and non-believers is apparent throughout Kimball's statement. Not only did he completely disregard the protestor's years of efforts to implement change for Black individuals in the Church, he also completely avoided directing his declaration toward the Black race. This avoidance to recognize the Black race suggested a removal of responsibility from the Church for the oppressive practices of Black Priesthood denial. Although the obvious issue addressed was the removal of Black Priesthood denial, Kimball never directly mentioned Black individuals. In his effort to avoid allotting any recognition to protest actions against the Church, Kimball's attitude may be interpreted as uncaring. When one considers the years of protest actions against the Church to allow Black men an equal place in its hierarchical chain, it seems uncaring for Kimball to intentionally avoid mentioning Black men when announcing his revelation.

#### Structure

Kimball's introduction narrowed the subject and utilized an attention gaining strategy. In the introduction of his official statement, Kimball explained the Church's desire to extend the Priesthood to every worthy man regardless of race. Kimball immediately explained that the inspiration behind extending the Priesthood to every worthy man was due to "everincreasing numbers" of individuals joining the Church all over the world. Kimball narrowed his

subject in the introduction by excluding other factors that inspired the Church to change its practice. Kimball captured the audience's attention when he stated, "This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords" (D #1). Kimball left the audience with the desire to know more about the change in Church practice.

Kimball organized the body of his statement chronologically. He began the body of his statement by reminding the audience that Prophets and Presidents that led the Church previously had promised that some day all worthy men would be allowed to hold the office of the Priesthood. Kimball then explained that the First Presidency spent many hours praying and "supplicating the Lord for divine guidance" to enact the change in Church policy that they desired. Finally, Kimball announced that God responded to the prayers and all worthy men could enter the Priesthood. He concluded the body by instructing all Priesthood leaders to follow Church policy when ordaining all worthy men into the Priesthood. Kimball began the body of his statement by explaining the early promise of Prophets and Presidents of the past, and then discusses the present by instructing Priesthood leaders on their current duties in the Church.

The conclusion of Kimball's statement summarizes his purpose. Kimball reiterates his declaration that the Lord

has changed Church policy allowing all worthy males the right to enter the Priesthood. His conclusion accentuates the seriousness of the revelation and asks that all the Lord's children "prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel" (D #4). An open invitation to all the Lord's children emphasizes the sincerity of Kimball's revelation.

#### Supporting Materials

Kimball relied on the authority of the First Presidency to bring evidence to his argument. Throughout his statement, Kimball chose to use pronouns such as "we" and "our" indicating a shared authority with his First Presidency. His theme of strength in unity when explaining Church beliefs is an attempt to build strength in Kimball's argument. Through the study of the LDS Church, this researcher has learned that God occasions a revelation to the Prophet of the Church. This fact is unclear in Kimball's official statement because he intentionally avoided explicitly stating that the Lord occasioned him with a revelation. When describing the revelation, Kimball stated, "He has heard our prayers, and by revelation, has confirmed that the long-promised day has come . . ." (D #3). The ambiguity concerning the receiver of the revelation allows the audience to recognize the authority as the entire First Presidency.

### Strategies

Kimball used strong religious language in his statement that stressed the magnitude of his revelatory experience. When discussing the change in Church practice concerning the Priesthood, Kimball chose phrases and words that are appropriate in a religious context. In his statement, Kimball used the following phrases and words: "blessings which the gospel affords", "God's eternal plan", "witnessing the faithfulness", "supplicating the Lord for divine guidance", and "blessing of the gospel." Kimball's celestial and ethereal word choice suggested an attempt to add impact to his revelatory experience.

In his statement, Kimball directed his appeal toward the needs and drives of LDS believers. Kimball explained that the impetus behind the First Presidency "supplicating the Lord for divine guidance" was due to Church expansion into many nations. Members of the Church believe that in order to build the kingdom of God on earth they must organize and plan (Hansen 121). A major factor of planning and organizing is the Church's ability to expand into other nations. It is important to remember that Church practice limited its expansion into predominantly Black countries. Prior to Kimball's revelation, it was not feasible to send missionaries to those countries where Black men could not participate in the Priesthood. Kimball tried to appeal to the LDS believers spiritual needs by informing them that the

Church could share its beliefs with all races. By not specifically recognizing Black men, Kimball takes focus from the protest actions and directs it to the spiritual aspects of the Church. Kimball attempted to comfort LDS believers by not depicting the Church as intentionally racist and to limit the amount of influence of pro-equality groups over the change in doctrine.

Although no aesthetic techniques are directly evident in Kimball's statement, he briefly uses an allusion as a persuasive strategy. Kimball precedes the announcement of his revelation with a reference to the historical opinion of past Prophets and Presidents. Kimball stated, "Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood" (D #2). This sentence explaining the position that past Prophets and Presidents shared concerning the Priesthood is an argument used to persuade the audience to accept Kimball's declaration of a revelation as an inevitable occurrence.

#### Summary

The official statement of 1978 was inevitable. As established in Chapter I, this researcher finds introspective criticism vital when conducting an analysis of this nature. Therefore, it is important that the critic identify what is stated as well as what is not stated in the

rhetorical artifact. Kimball does not acknowledge external or internal pressures as the reason the First Presidency supplicated the Lord for guidance. Although ambiguity is evident in all four of the official statements, it is most noticeable in the official statement of 1978. This researcher concludes that Kimball's only option was to disregard any external or internal pressure as impetus for his revelation. If Kimball had made reference to external and internal pressures against the Church, he would have lost credibility and subject the Church to more ridicule. Interior Secretary Stewart Udall stated,

It was inevitable that national attention would be focused on what critics have called the anti-Negro doctrine of the LDS Church. As the Church becomes increasingly an object of national interest, this attention is certain to intensify, for the divine curse concept which is so commonly held among our people runs counter to the great stream of modern religious and social thought. (qtd in Tanner 55)

The discontent evident in the quote above solidifies this researcher's argument that Kimball supplicated the Lord for guidance because society would never accept the archaic racist religious practices of the Church. Whether or not the Lord spoke to Kimball and occasioned a divine revelation is of no concern to this study. This study is concerned with what may have caused the First Presidency to devise the

four official statements. Although Kimball stated that inspiration for the Church to supplicate the Lord was due to the growing interest in the Church, his word choice and blatant avoidance of the external and internal pressures indicate otherwise.

#### CHAPTER SUMMARY

This researcher accepts the theory that a rhetorical act is an intentional attempt to overcome the obstacles in a given situation to achieve a particular end (Campbell 7). Accepting this theory, the existence of the four official statements is due to protest actions against the Church from the NAACP, civil rights activists and dissonant LDS believers.

Drawing from the findings of each official statement analyzed, this study has identified several factors that solidify the argument that the impetus for each statement was external and internal pressures. First, the First Presidency intentionally avoids specifically identifying the motivation behind the official statements. Although it is implied that the Church is being questioned for its practice of Black Priesthood denial the First Presidency refuses to acknowledge the source of the questioning. This researcher finds that, in their effort to minimize the importance of external and internal pressures, the First Presidency weakens its own argument. By not acknowledging the antagonist, the First Presidency appears less confident in

its defense of Church practice and is ultimately unsuccessful. It is obvious that the official statements were not successful because the Church was unable to appease protest actions against the Church until a change in doctrine occurred.

Second, the influence of external and internal pressures against the Church is evident in the language used in the official statements. As external and internal pressures against the Church mounted, the language used to justify Black Priesthood denial became more ambiguous. As societies value system began changing, pro-equality groups would no longer tolerate pre-mortal existence and the "curse" on the Black man as a suitable excuse for Black Priesthood denial. Knowing this fact, the First Presidency was forced to pull away from their own racist belief system as justification and adopt an ambiguous defense for Black Priesthood denial. This change in language solidifies this researcher's argument that external and internal pressures forced the First Presidency not only to devise its official statements but to adopt language suitable for its defense. This Chapter suggests several findings. The implications of these findings will be discussed in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The previous two chapters discussed the history and practice of Black Priesthood denial in the LDS Church as well as an analysis of the four official statements that discussed Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood. The purpose of Chapter IV is to summarize findings and present conclusions. Specifically, this Chapter will answer the questions posed in Chapter I and offer recommendations for further research.

#### Questions

1. To what extent was the doctrinal change of the status of Blacks with the LDS Church voluntary ?

Two distinct reasons offer evidence that the Church changed its doctrine because of the external and internal pressures concerning Black Priesthood denial. First, the Church's refusal to recognize external and internal pressure in the text of the official statements lends evidence to the belief that recognition would indicate defeat. Second, the rapid change in societies value system provided the proof that Black Priesthood denial would never be a socially acceptable practice.

It is difficult to imagine that any institution could experience social unrest, riots, demonstrations, and a vast

amount of negative publicity and not acknowledge its effects. The Church devised four official statements focusing on Blacks, civil rights, and the Priesthood while offering no recognition to the evident pressures against it. In an effort to appear unaffected by external and internal pressures, the LDS Church refused to address protest actions against the practice of Black Priesthood denial. This intentional refusal to confront its antagonists offers evidence that the Church was indeed reacting to and acting upon the influence of external and internal pressures when it changed its doctrine on the status of Blacks in the Priesthood. Unable to defend the practice of Black Priesthood denial without revealing the Church's racist beliefs in black inferiority, the First Presidency could no longer devise a suitable rebuttal to the antagonistic pressures against the Church. By remaining ambiguous and seemingly unaffected by external and internal pressures the Church appeared faultless in the conflict. Feasibly, the Church could not recognize external and internal pressures without weakening its defense that Black Priesthood denial was God's decision and not the Church's. The findings of this study revealed that the impetus behind the First Presidency's official statements concerning the practice of Black Priesthood denial was the protest actions of pro-equality groups. Consequently, it is evident that if pro-equality groups and dissonant LDS believers forced the

rhetorical artifacts into existence, then the Church also found its motivation to change its racist practice in these same pressures.

Second, knowing that the First Presidency maintained a degree of intelligence, it is safe to assume that they were aware of the change in society's value system. Society's changing value system would no longer accept the practice of Black Priesthood denial as tolerable, and the dramatic change in language usage from the first official statement to the last indicates that the First Presidency recognized the change in social attitudes toward the Black race. The first official statement promoted racist concepts of Black inferiority that were not evident in the later statements. This adoption of socially acceptable language is an indicator of how the Church recognized and complied with the demands for verbally depicting the Black race as equal to all other races. Although the First Presidency waited until 1978 to change its doctrine, it is evident that external and internal pressures forced the Church to publicly de-emphasize its belief in White superiority. This compliance illustrates the affects of societies changing value system on the Church.

2. To what extent is the Karlyn Kohrs Campbell lexicon useful in analyzing the four official statements of the Church?

This inquiry successfully illustrated Campbell's belief

that actions provoke rhetorical acts. Campbell's seven elements allowed an atomized analysis to be conducted that was all inclusive of events not evident in the body of the texts. The chosen methodology enabled this inquiry to be broken into finite elements to interpret the rhetor's intentions. Each element for analysis provoked extensive discussion about the text. Campbell's method of breaking down information in order to answer crucial questions about the text was imperative for this inquiry. As stated in Chapter One, it is difficult if not impossible to determine the antagonist behind any rhetorical act. Facilitating Campbell's atomized method, allowed this study to include several avenues of proof that enabled a feasible theory to develop. An exploration of internal and external pressures was not only enlightening but essential for understanding the official statements. The official statements did not directly recognize the social unrest exhibited against the Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. Campbell's explorative theory enabled this researcher to delve beyond the text into the context of the official statements.

#### Recommendations

This study did not intend to attack the practices of the LDS Church nor cast undeserving negative connotations on its belief system. It was a study illustrating how social change and societal values forced the racist practice of Black Priesthood denial to change. The word racist, when

discussing the practice of Black Priesthood denial, is used in its denotative meaning.

The study of LDS practices and its official statements have not been exhausted in this inquiry. Suggestions for further research regarding the LDS Church are:

1. A comparative study of doctrinal change and societies role in that change between the LDS Church and the Catholic Church.
2. A rhetorical analysis of the LDS Church's official statements concerning its alleviation of polygamy.
3. A study of the Church's four official statements concerning Black Priesthood denial that is not inclusive of external and internal pressures.
4. An analysis of the Church's four official statements concerning Black Priesthood denial inclusive of external and internal pressures using Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell's ten-step plan of propaganda analysis.

This inquiry sought to discover the actions that provoked the change in the LDS Church's practice of Black Priesthood denial. Additional studies that utilize subjective analysis would contribute to the theory that rhetorical analysis should impart a level of social value, consciousness, and awareness. This study attempted to delve beyond the text to answer the questions posed. The findings of this inquiry attempted to provide tangible evidence that there are many

ways to look at the impetus behind rhetorical acts.

APPENDIX A  
OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF AUGUST 17, 1951

August 17, 1951

- 1 The attitude of the Church with reference to negroes remains as it has always stood. It is not a matter of the declaration of a policy but of direct commandment from the Lord, on which is founded the doctrine of the Church from the days of its organization, to the effect that negroes may become members of the church but that they are not entitled to the priesthood at the present time. The prophets of the Lord have make several statements as to the operation of the principle. President Brigham Young said: "Why are so many of the inhabitants of the earth cursed with a skin of blackness? It comes in consequence of their fathers rejecting the power of the holy priesthood, and the law of God. They will go down to death. And when all the rest of the children have received their blessings in the holy priesthood, then that curse will be removed from the seed of Cain, and they will then come up and possess the priesthood, and receive all the blessings which we now are entitled to."
- 2 President Wilford Woodruff made the following statement: "The day will come when all that race will be redeemed and possess all the blessings which we now have".
- 3 The position of the Church regarding the negro may be understood when another doctrine of the Church is kept

in mind, namely, that the conduct of spirits in the premortal existence has some determining effect upon the conditions and circumstances under which these spirits take on mortality, and that while the details of this principle have not been made known, the principle itself indicates that the coming to this earth and taking on mortality is a privilege that is given to those who maintained their first estate; and that the worth of the privilege is so great that spirits are willing to come to earth and take on bodies no matter what the handicap may be as to the kind of bodies they are to secure; and that among the handicaps, failure of the right to enjoy in mortality the blessings of the priesthood, is a handicap which spirits are willing to assume in order that they might come to earth. Under this principle there is no injustice whatsoever involved in this deprivation as to the holding of the priesthood by the negroes.

APPENDIX B

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF OCTOBER 6, 1963

October 6, 1963

- 1 During recent months, both in Salt Lake City and across the nation, considerable interest has been expressed in the position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints on the matter of civil rights. We would like it to be known that there is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed.
- 2 We say again, as we have said many times before, that we believe that all men are the children of the same God, and that it is a moral evil for any human being the right to gainful employment, to full educational opportunity, and to every privilege of citizenship, just as it is a moral evil to deny him the right to worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.
- 3 We have consistently and persistently upheld the constitution of the United States, and as far as we are concerned this means upholding the constitutional rights of every citizen of the United States.
- 4 We call upon all men, everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children. Anything less than this defeats our high ideal of the brotherhood of man.

APPENDIX C

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF DECEMBER 15, 1969

December 15, 1969

1 To General Authorities, Regional Representatives of the Twelve, Stake Presidents, Mission Presidents, and Bishops.

Dear Brethren:

In view of confusion that has arisen, it was decided at meeting of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve to restate the position of the Church with regard to the Negro both in society and in the Church.

2 First, may we say that we know something of the sufferings of those who are discriminated against in a denial of their civil rights and constitutional privileges. Our early history as a church is a tragic story of persecution and oppression. Our people repeatedly were denied the protection of the law. They were driven and plundered, robbed and murdered by mobs, who in many instances were aided and abetted by those sworn to uphold the law. We as a people have experienced the bitter fruits of civil discrimination and mob violence.

3 We believe that the Constitution of the United States was divinely inspired, that it was produced by "wise men" whom God raised up for this "very purpose," and that the principles embodied in the Constitution are so fundamental and important that, if possible, they should be extended "for the rights and protection" of

all mankind.

- 4 In revelations received by the first prophet of the Church in this dispensation, Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the Lord made it clear that it is "not right that any man should be in bondage on to another." These words were spoken prior to the Civil War. From these and other revelations have sprung the Church's deep and historic concern with man's free agency and our commitment to the sacred principles of the Constitution.
- 5 It follows, therefore, that we believe the Negro, as well as those of other races, should have his full Constitutional privileges as a member of society, and we hope that members of the Church everywhere will do their part as citizens must have equal opportunities and protection under the law with reference to civil rights.
- 6 However, matters of faith, conscience and theology are not within the purview of the civil law. The first amendment to the Constitution specifically provides that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."
- 7 The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race who choose to join the Church falls wholly within the category of

religion. It has no bearing upon matters of civil rights. In no case or degree does it deny to the Negro his full privileges as a citizen of the nation.

8 This position has no relevancy whatever to those who do not wish to join the Church. Those individuals, we suppose do not believe in the divine origin and nature of the Church, nor that we have the priesthood of God. Therefore, if they feel we have no priesthood, they should have no concern with any aspect of our theology on priesthood so long as that theology does not deny any man his Constitutional privileges.

9 A word of explanation concerning the position of the Church:

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints owes its origin, its existence, and its hope for the future to the principles of continuous revelation. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

10 From the beginning of this dispensation, Joseph Smith and all succeeding presidents of the Church have taught that Negroes, while spirit children of a common Father, and the progeny of our earthly parents Adam and Eve, were not yet to receive the priesthood, for reasons which we believe are known to God, but which He has not

made fully known to man.

- 11 Our living prophet, President David O. McKay, has said. "The seeming discrimination by the Church toward the Negro is not something which originated with man; but goes back into the beginning with God . . . "Revelation assures us that this plan antedates man's mortal existence extending back to man's pre-existent state." President McKay has also said, "Sometime in God's eternal plan, the Negro will be given the right to hold the priesthood." Until God reveals His will in this matter, to him whom we sustain as a prophet, we are bound by that same will. Priesthood, when it is conferred on any man, comes as a blessing from God, not of men.
- 12 We feel nothing but love, compassion, and the deepest appreciation for the rich talents, endowments, and the earnest strivings of our Negro brothers and sisters. We are eager to share with men of all races the blessings of the Gospel. We have no racially-segregated congregations.
- 13 Were we the leaders of an enterprise created by ourselves and operated only according to our own earthly wisdom, it would be a simple thing to act according to popular will. But we believe that this work is directed by God and that the conferring of the priesthood must await His revelation. To do otherwise

would be to deny the very premise on which the Church is established.

- 14 We recognize that those who do not accept the principle of modern revelation may oppose our point of view. We repeat that such would not wish for membership in the Church, and therefore the question of priesthood should hold no interest for them. Without prejudice they should grant us the privilege afforded under the Constitution to exercise our chosen form of religion just as we must grant all others a similar privilege. They must recognize that the question of bestowing or withholding priesthood in the Church is a matter of religion and not a matter of Constitutional right.
- 15 We extend the hand of friendship to men everywhere and the hand of fellowship to all who wish to join the Church and partake of the many rewarding opportunities to be found therein.
- 16 We join with those throughout the world who pray that all of the blessings of the Gospel of Jesus Christ may in the due time of the Lord become available in men of faith everywhere. Until that time comes we must trust in God, in His wisdom and in His tender mercy.
- 17 Meanwhile we must strive harder to emulate His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose new commandment it was that we should love one another. In developing that love and concern for one another while awaiting revelations yet

to come, let us hope that with respect to these religious differences, we may gain reinforcement for understanding and appreciation for such differences. They challenge our common similarities, as children of one Father, to enlarge the outreachings of our divine souls.

APPENDIX D

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF JULY 8, 1978

June 8, 1978

1 To all general and local priesthood officers of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the World:

Dear Brethren:

As we have witnessed the expansion of the work of the Lord over the earth, we have been grateful that people of any nations have responded to the message of the restored gospel, and have joined the Church in ever increasing numbers. This, in turn, has inspired us with a desire to extend to every worthy member of the Church all of the privileges and blessings which the gospel affords.

2 Aware of the promises made by the prophets and presidents of the Church who have preceded us that at some time, in God's eternal plan, all of our brethren who are worthy may receive the priesthood, and witnessing the faithfulness of those from whom the priesthood has been withheld, we have pleaded long and earnestly in behalf of these, our faithful brethren, spending many hours in the Upper Room of the Temple supplicating the Lord for divine guidance.

3 He has heard our prayers, and by revelation has confirmed that the long-promised day has come when every faithful, worthy man in the Church may receive the holy priesthood, with power to exercise its divine

authority, and enjoy with his loved ones every blessing that flows therefrom, including the blessings of the temple. Accordingly, all worthy male members of the Church may be ordained to the priesthood without regard for race or color. Priesthood to insure that they meet the established standards for worthiness.

- 4 We declare with soberness that the Lord has now made known his will for the blessing of all his children throughout the earth who will hearken to the voice of his authorized servants, and prepare themselves to receive every blessing of the gospel.

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